ROBOTECH™ ART 3

THE SENTINELS

CARL MACEK

STARBLAZE EDITIONS/ GRAPHICS

ROBOTECH™
ART 3

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PART ONE

THE STORY OF THE SENTINELS

1

THE CONCEPT OF ROBOTECH

Robotech was born out of necessity. Initially, the concepts and details of this complex science fiction saga were extrapolated from existing animated footage in order to satisfy a particular aesthetic direction which John Rocknowski, President of Harmony Gold Marketing, described as "the king of storytelling in which the audience knows from the very beginning that it will not be short-changed." *Robotech* owes much of its success to original material produced by Tatsunoko Studios. Westernized, redefined and reconceptualized as *Robotech*, this footage began to take on a life of its own.

The storyline developed in *Robotech* has been described as a pop science-fiction soap opera which draws inspiration from Frank Herbert's *Dune*, George Lucas' *Star Wars* trilogy, L. Ron Hubbard's *Battlefield Earth* and *Star Trek*. *Robotech* is not, regardless of its inappropriate title, the story of sentient robots capable of transforming into automobiles or other noteworthy icons of earthborn history and culture. Rather *Robotech* is the story of a multi-generational struggle to save planet earth from alien domination. It utilizes concepts of bio-mechanical symbiosis, genetic engineering, and metaphysics in a way that transcends its initial form—animated programming produced for domestic television syndication. The story struck a chord. The characters were believable (thanks to the loving detail of the original Japanese character design and the intelligent dialogue composed by the staff of inspired writers working at Intersound). The action was hard, fast, and as true to life as animation can get. Most importantly, it was created without the initial cooperation of a toy company, a rare occurrence in a world of animated programming geared for domestic syndication. It was a Harmony Gold production from the beginning.

Eventually, "The Robotech Universe" expanded to include a wealth of licensees and storytelling venues. Some were extraordinarily successful. Others, coming in the wake of the glut of licensed products flooding the marketplace following the success of "He Man and the Masters of the Universe," failed to make a splash.

The genuine success stories were primarily in the publishing arena. Ballantine's series of "adult" novelizations of the *Robotech* storyline fulfilled the promise of the original eighty-five episode television series. If sales are any indication, Palladium Books' Role Playing Game and supplements are, in the words of Kevin Siembieda, author of the game, "a mega-hit!" Donning's original volume, *Robotech Art 1*, has been a best-seller in the specialty retail market and in the traditional book trade.

When Harmony Gold began producing *Robotech* we had no idea of the response it would generate in the mass-market jungle known as first run syndication. But once we were into the project, Frank Agrama, owner and chief executive officer of Harmony Gold, commented that he would not be surprised if "five years from now kids'll still be arguing over the definition of Protoculture."

Early ratings successes, the acquisition of a master toy licensee (Matchbox) and the placement of the series in over 110 domestic markets and nearly 70 percent of the rest of the world gave everyone at Harmony Gold the feeling that Robotech would continue indefinitely. The story was open-ended. Many interesting situations developed and several purposely were not completely resolved. During the heyday of *Robotech's* syndication, Harmony Gold was flooded with letters asking (and sometimes demanding) to know details concerning the fate of Rick Hunter, Lisa Hayes, Max and Miriya Sterling, Breetai, Exedore, Minmei, Scott Bernard, and the rest.

In response to this apparent need both *Robotech, The Movie: The Untold Story* and *Robotech II: The Sentinels* were born. In the following pages, the anatomy of making an animated television series will be explored. Some of you may find the process of animation fascinating. Others may want to skip the complex details and get right to the meat of things—what happened to the survivors of the SDF-1. But the

story of the *making* of *Robotech II: The Sentinels* is so completely tied to the complex science-fiction plot, that it can only be revealed through the examination of this noble experiment in which East (Tatsunoko) meets west (Harmony Gold) as equals.

The process of developing *The Sentinels* began in earnest in the fall of 1985. Kenji Yoshida, Ippei Kuri, Koki Narushima, and Iwata from Tatsunoko came to Los Angeles in September and participated with Harmony Gold and Matchbox in a series of meetings held at Harmony Gold's offices to develop a production plan and schedule for the production of *Robotech II: The Sentinels.* At the conclusion of the meetings it was determined that Ahmed Agrama and I would travel to Japan and work out the details of character design and plot. If everything went as planned, *The Sentinels* would be ready for domestic television syndication in the fall of 1986.

The capital necessary to finance *Robotech II: The Sentinels* was to come from a joint venture between Harmony Gold and Matchbox International. Matchbox's interest was totally justifiable seeing that it was the master toy licensee for *Robotech* and as such had invested a considerable sum of money in the tooling and marketing of their toy line which was, at the time of the initial development of *The Sentinels,* as yet untested in the marketplace. The production of the additional sixty-five episodes of *The Sentinels* would assure *Robotech* a place in the roster of first-run animated programming slated for domestic syndication in the fall of 1986.

Up to this point, *Robotech* had been an exercise in post-production. Intersound, Inc., a high tech audio and video pre- and post-production studio, worked diligently to reproduce *Robotech.* Enhancing the foley[1] effects, creating and enhancing existing electronic sound effects, correcting and retiming the animation,[2] and producing and recording an automatic dialogue replacement script were the domain and responsibility of the staff at Intersound. The results were a natural style of storytelling which took its cues from the existing animation but, at the same time, imposed an original story and edited syntax into material which ultimately created an original adaptation.

In the months to come, Intersound would be called upon to augment the process of preproduction begun in Japan. Ahmed Agrama, president of Intersound, Inc., and I began the process of interviewing potential artists whose talents would complement the animation style practiced by Tatsunoko Studios. We found several capable artists. Australian storyboard veteran Paul Power, Kent Butterworth, and the innovative Kevin Altieri were engaged to work on storyboarding *The Sentinels* once the character designs and plots were approved.

The sound-effects artists and engineers at Intersound were all well aware of the fact that in a few short months they would be asked to create the entire audio portion of *The Sentinels* from scratch. It was decided that *The Sentinels*

[1] Foley is a particular style of sound effect work which is performed to existing footage by a foley artist who attempts to reproduce the sounds made by actors or create the sounds made by cartoon characters in "live" recording sessions.

[2] Much of the animation which comes from Japan is not printed using the "A/B" roll method. Therefore at every cut from shot to shot there is a "splice mark" which is visible on domestic broadcasts. It is also interesting to note that the Japanese generally photograph their animation geared specifically for television on 16mm as opposed to the standard 35mm used in their theatrical releases. Also much of the editing which took place in the "Westernization" of the original Japanese episodes of what eventually became Robotech was done to eliminate ethnic gesture and expression and retime the movement for Western audiences.

would be a showcase for Intersound. For starters, the production would be created and recorded in stereo. All the foley, sound effects, and music would be originated in stereo. George Bours, assigned to the task of music editing and final re-mix on the project, began the time-consuming process of inventing new sound effects and cataloging them for use in the production. An image enhancement module would be introduced to the Bosch tele-cine converter, thus reducing the grain and making the 16mm footage comparable to 35mm. Every element of the recording studio would be enhanced to accommodate the high level of production that Intersound was willing to commit to *The Sentinels*.

But, at this point nothing could proceed until the actual designs for characters and mecha needed to tell the story of *The Sentinels* were finalized. This meant traveling to Japan and engaging in intense creative sessions with the writers and artists assembled by Tatsunoko to work on this project.

The relationship between Harmony Gold and Tatsunoko Studios has a long history. For many years Harmony Gold acted as the international distributor of animation produced by Tatsunoko. Series such as *Speed Racer, Time-Bokan,* and *The Brave Frog* among others, have been international animation staples due to the efforts of Harmony Gold's international division, headed by David LaFollette. With the formation of Harmony Gold, U.S.A., Frank Agrama began a series of maneuvers that eventually would lead to the development of *Robotech*. Throughout the process, Harmony Gold and Tatsunoko were able to forge a position with quality animated programming and marketing know-how which contributed to the explosion of first run animated programs designed for domestic television syndication.

Too often the intercultural differences between Japanese animation and Western animation has caused problems. For the most part Japanese animation is not produced for a juvenile audience. First run animation is usually shown in prime time on Japanese television. The plots, even in shows designed for younger viewers, are somehow more sophisticated. Much of the material designed for children has a great deal of local color and ethnicity. It is not designed for international sales. The action-adventure categories are a different story. Although they are often set in Japan, the cast is usually international. Even the backgrounds are given a neutral treatment with many buildings and billboards sporting English words and ad copy. This visual neutrality works to the advantage of the Japanese studios who plan to have their material sold on the international market. Tatsunoko learned early the value of creating "neutral" environments for their animated projects.

Regardless of the neutrality of the backgrounds, the actual design of the animated characters (and sometimes even the body language inherent in the animation) would betray the origin of the animation. For many years Japanese animation was thought of as cheap and poorly produced. Unfortunately, as the Japanese animation industry became more and more sophisticated, both in the areas of pure storytelling and aesthetic direction, the stigma remained. Early Western adaptations of Japanese animation did little to relieve this condition. The overall direction and editing was designed for form and not content. In many instances the end results of Western adaptations did not live up to the promise of the original Japanese material.

Harmony Gold did not want to fall into the same trap with *Robotech,* their first project designed

directly for the domestic television market. The goal was to study the work and adapt the visual style and storytelling direction into an approximation of the original while also making the stories accessible to a mass audience. Tatsunoko understood the difficulty of the task and allowed Harmony Gold free reign in their adaptation. *Robotech* was an experiment. By eliminating "ethnic gesture" through digital video editing and retiming, and by constructing a storyline which retained the soul of the original, *Robotech's* writers, producers, and directors were able to create an original animated television series which walked the thin line between adult and children's programming.

The success of this relationship between Harmony Gold and Tatsunoko eventually led to their interest in producing an animated series designed to be shown on both American and Japanese television. The opportunity rose with the production of *Robotech II: The Sentinels.*

2

WHY ROBOTECH II: "THE SENTINELS"?

Before Filmation's *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, the concept of first-run animation produced specifically for the domestic syndication market simply did not exist. It was a well-intentioned idea that, if not abused, could mean a renaissance in animation production. The particulars of the economics for this type of broadcast profile are remarkably simple. For producing animation there is one basic formula. A toy company supports the production of an animated television series that directly relates to a specific product line (with episodes ranging in number from five to sixty-five with a financial commitment generally equal to half of the actual production costs. The production company or the toy manufacturer links up with a syndication service and proceeds to clear stations with a

sales formula which includes direct cash payment and, ideally, *barter* time. A second formula exists which revolves around a media buyer—a company which secures advertising time—acquiring the rights to certain programs and then offering these programs in exchange for barter time. The programming in this instance does not necessarily directly relate to a product—this is one of the many ways that cereal manufacturers advertise their products on television.

By bartering for specific programming, television stations get programs without having to spend cash. What the station programming executives spend instead is "commercial time." In an ideal situation barter programming is good for both parties.

Typically, each half hour of commercially broadcast television is allocated a maximum of six minutes of paid advertisements. In a barter, a television station transfers two or three minutes to the syndicator in exchange for the privilege of broadcasting a specific program. The actual time that is allocated for commercials varies from station to station. The goal is to create enough commercial time (and then sell it) in order to make a profit while not inconveniencing the viewing audience with too many commercials. Cable Television operates by a different set of standards.

The value of this commercial time is generated by a complex formula which relates to ratings and the percentage of U.S. households reached. Similar rating in exactly the same time slots in New York City and Butte, Montana would generate wildly different commercial ad rates. In the same way, a huge ratings success in Butte may never generate as much ad revenue per commercial spot as a modest ratings performance in New York City. It is an elusive concept which makes sense to the industry insiders but often confuses the uninitiated.

But what does all this have to do with *Robotech II: The Sentinels?*

Everything!

In a typical barter a manufacturer determines that the total cost of production amortized over a period of time equal to the length of a broadcast license should be less than the cost of purchasing commercial time on the potential stations that will be carrying the programming. In the long run, if the cost of coproducing is less than the advertising time purchased, then "selling" the program via barter is profitable from the start. Before the fall of 1985 the formula used to determine the specifics of this economic conundrum always favored production/barter instead of direct advertisement. Ratings were generally good enough to assure that barter time would be greater than the actual production costs of animation. This is the system which brought *He-Man, G.I. Joe, Go-Bots, Thundercats, M.A.S.K., Jayce and the Wheeled Warriors, Transformers, JEM, She-Ra, Princess of Power*, and a score of other animated films to the venue of first-run syndication. It is not the system which first brought *Robotech* to television. Harmony Gold financed and distributed *Robotech* without the benefit of barter. However, it would be the means of getting *Robotech II: The Sentinels* on the air—the only means, given the current situation.

Initially *Robotech* was produced without the assistance of a toy licensee. *Robotech* first aired in a limited number of markets in the spring of 1985. Matchbox International became the master toy licensee following *Robotech's* first-season success. This was before the floodgates were opened by toy companies and media buyers creating a glut of first run "afternoon prime time" children's programming. Competi-

tion was fierce. It was a buyer's market. Television programming executives had the luxury of choosing the best deals for their respective stations. In order to play the game, advertisers had to adapt to the changing environment. Eventually with the help of Matchbox, *Robotech* was able to reach a significant number of markets. But in order to maintain these markets in the wake of the coming glut of fall, 1986, Matchbox and Harmony Gold entered a joint venture to coproduce a sequel to *Robotech*.

Robotech was an experiment for Matchbox. It followed in the wake of their successful *Voltron* line. In the case of *Robotech*, however, a large percentage of the toys were original designs. *Voltron* was, for all intents, an import line. One of the ways that Matchbox hoped to keep the original spirit of *Robotech* intact in their toy line was to use an in-house design group to create the original toys they planned to introduce.

Creating toys is incredibly complex and time consuming. It is also expensive. Models must be invented, engineered, and then tooled. The entire *Robotech* venture was something new for Matchbox. By its very nature, it would take Matchbox a long time to tool all the new *Robotech* toys necessary for Matchbox's 1986 product line. In order to maximize the investment, *Robotech* had to remain an important issue at least through 1986.

After analyzing the market, Matchbox determined that the best method for insuring the longevity of *Robotech* was to participate in the production of *The Sentinels*. It was the same sort of thing that Hasbro or Mattel would do given a similar situation. In this way Matchbox would be assured another year of selling the items in their extensive *Robotech* line—a significant percentage of their 1986 product line.

Their requirements were simple. Tooling costs were fixed—characters, vehicles, transformable mecha, and so forth, had all been designed and packaged. All Harmony Gold had to do was come up with a story which would blend all of the pertinent elements of the three original *Robotech* series. In this way Matchbox could extend their existing *Robotech* line without the massive start-up costs involved in an undertaking of this nature. A few new items would be slated for introduction in order to keep the toy line exciting. And with the barter sales of *Robotech II: The Sentinels* in place in over sixty-five domestic television markets representing more than half the total U.S. households, things didn't look too bad. The only tricky part was coming up with a story which addressed the original unresolved storyline.

Robotech was unique in several ways. Its precise graphic iconography, its startlingly colorful animation, and its complex, open-ended, serialized storyline. The storyline of *Robotech* was the key to developing *The Sentinels*.

The open-ended finale of *Robotech's* first generation left many unanswered questions.[3] What happened to Rick Hunter? Who survived the destruction of the SDF-1 and SDF-2? Where are Breetai and Exedore? What does the SDF-3 look like? Does Minmei ever sing again? The plot of the original series had Rick Hunter, Lisa Hayes, and the survivors of the final battle with Khyron planning to build a giant spaceship and travel to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters to learn the real reason for the intergalactic war started by the Zentraedi—biogenetically engineered clones who were servants of the Robo-

[3] The finale of the Macross Saga in which a cataclysmic battle results in death and destruction which segues into the Robotech Masters sequence—takes place fifteen years later.

tech Masters. It was practically the last time anyone ever saw or heard from the members of the Robotech Expeditionary Force. It seemed like a good place to begin the story of *The Sentinels.*

The original story also told of the final voyage of the Robotech Masters, a voyage which would lead the Masters to Earth and an ultimate showdown with the Armies of the Southern Cross as well as the invasion and conquest of the Earth by the vengeful Invid.

Since the Robotech Masters were on their way to the Earth to recover their lost battlefortress, the Robotech Expeditionary Forces (R.E.F.) must encounter some threat on their abandoned homeworld which would keep them occupied for at least fifteen years. The solution was almost too simple. Instead of coming to a diplomatic agreement with the Robotech Masters, the R.E.F. is forced to do battle with the Invid on Zor's homeworld. It is a battle which leads the way for many startling adventures.

The open-ended nature of the final act of *Robotech*—a sequence in which Scott Bernard zooms into outer space in an ill-conceived attempt to find Rick Hunter and the SDF-3—also cried for an explanation. It was determined that *Robotech II: The Sentinels* would end at the same point, only from the viewpoint of Rick Hunter and company. It was a tidy way to solve all of the continuity problems created in the original storyline.

When Tatsunoko Studios learned of our interest in producing a "sequel" to *Robotech,* they looked upon the situation as an opportunity to create an international production which would showcase the talents of both Harmony Gold and Tatsunoko. They did not want merely to do a sequel to the original *Macross* series—rather they were more interested in doing a sequel to the much larger *Robotech Saga.*

Ippei Kuri and Kenji Yoshida understood the differences between the two storylines and began assembling a team of writers and artists to develop this new venture.

It is also interesting to note that *The Robotech Masters* sequence—freely adapted from Tatsunoko's most recent series, *The Southern Cross*—ended prematurely. As far as design and story went, *The Southern Cross* was Tatsunoko's masterpiece. Originally planned as a thirty-nine episode science-fiction epic, production on *The Southern Cross* was halted after only twenty-three episodes. This premature ending caused many of the concepts and designs of *The Southern Cross* to go unrealized. Many critics of the original Japanese work attribute this failure to a number of factors.

Confusing initial episodes, which did little to explore or explain the complex plot, combined with characterizations which did not fully blend into the original story, proved too much for the audience to deal with. By the time the series hit its stride, around episode ten, most of the audience had abandoned *Southern Cross* in favor of other programs.

Harmony Gold's resurrection of *The Southern Cross* as the middle act of *Robotech* was a revelation to the Japanese. Given the hindsight of completed production, the power and intrigue of the original concept could now be reborn in the struggles of a new generation of Robotech Defenders as they try to rebuild their world in the wake of near global destruction. A complete reworking of dialogue combined with the more formal plot of the Robotech series was more than enough to breathe life into characters who already had the necessary ingredients to become successful. Kenji Yoshida was the first to recognize that we had performed a miraculous turnaround with the characters from *Southern Cross.*

Taking their cue from our interest in pursuing the *Robotech* cycle—Tatsunoko lost no time in sending out the character and mecha designs for the unrealized portion of *Southern Cross*.

At the same time, they also took the liberty of designing a number of new "transformable" weapon and transportation systems. The feeling at Tatsunoko was strong, at this time, to maintain the transformable aspects of *Robotech* in *The Sentinels*. Subsequent discussions would lead Tatsunoko, Harmony Gold, and even Matchbox far afield from transformable toys.

The same desire to tell the rest of the story was also heartfelt at Harmony Gold. Everyone at the company had been living with these characters for so long that, even though they were cartoon characters, they somehow managed to take on a life of their own. It seemed that way not only from the internal thinking of the staff but also from the countless letters received at Harmony Gold from fans who demanded to know the rest of the story.

Certain characters and storylines were more important than others to the overall concept of *Robotech* and *Robotech II: The Sentinels*. The most notable omissions in the new storyline from the Macross saga are Lynn Kyle and the three comic Zentraedi—Konda, Rico, and Bron. Their adventures would have to wait to be chronicled elsewhere.

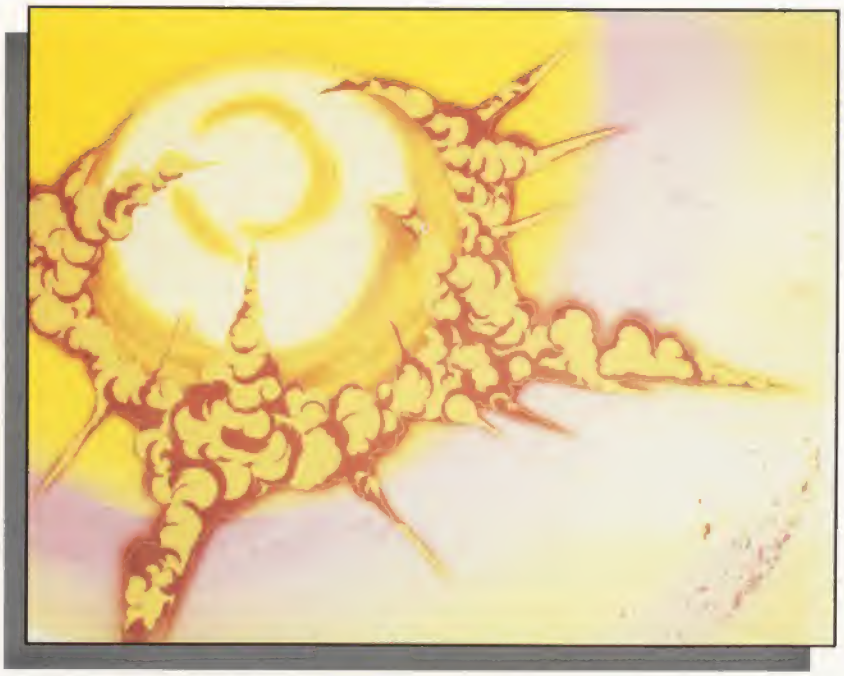
More significantly, an entire new cast of characters had to be created if the story of *The Sentinels* was to have the same epic feel as the original series. Several characters had already been created either directly (as in the *Robotech* graphic novel—an original story) or de facto (direct reference in the original series without actual screen time).

The introduction of Col. B. D. Edwards in the *Robotech* graphic novel was intentional. He would become a key figure in *The Sentinels*. Edwards' hatred for Roy Fokker, now transferred to Rick Hunter, forms a catalyst for much of the action of the series. Eventually Edwards and Hunter would face off in an ultimate showdown amid the burning ruins of the homeworld of the Robotech Masters.

Bowie Grant's parents were another element which, by the nature of the story, had to be designed. In the *Robotech* story, Bowie's parents joined the R.E.F. and accompanied Rick Hunter and the others on the critical mission to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters. This fit a similar pattern for Dana Sterling's parents, Max and Miriya. The reasons for this apparent desertion is simple—to a parent it would be foolish to take a small child on a mission in which combat with an unknown enemy is a possibility. And given the fact that the earth is, as far as these parents are concerned, relatively safe, it did not seem out of place for Dana and Bowie's parents to leave them on the earth. It was a curious situation which was described in the series, primarily due to the fact that in the original animation produced by Tatsunoko, *The Southern Cross* characters who ultimately became Dana Sterling and Bowie Grant had absolutely no relationship to the characters in the *Macross Saga*. The separate series' characters were part of two completely different storylines. However, since the situation was created it had to be resolved in *The Sentinels*.

The final major introduction which had to be included in the storyline of *The Sentinels* was Col. Johnathan Wolfe. Described in the original *Robotech* series as a famous war hero from the Robotech Expeditionary Force, Johnathan Wolfe had to have a history. That history would be documented in part during *The Sentinels*.

With these basic elements in place, the initial meetings with the representatives from Tatsunoko took place in Los Angeles in the fall of 1985. These meetings were designed to get the ball rolling at Tatsunoko prior to our arrival in November. The skeletal story of *The Sentinels* was outlined. Environments were described. Much of the time was spent trying to create a particular visual style for the project.



Everyone wanted to create a new entity. The animation and visual style of *Robotech* was several years old and the artists and designers assigned to work on the project were interested in expanding their skill and vision. Many art books were passed around. Most of the discussion revolved around the idea of "Western story—Japanese Style." The outcome of the meetings was a revelation for the Japanese.

For the first time the Japanese felt as though they would be treated as equals. Most of the time Japanese animation studios are used to produce animation for purely economic reasons. Often there was never any input asked from the artists and directors working in Japan. The studio would receive a storyboard and be required to animate the material as ordered. It did not leave much room for personal creativity on the part of the Japanese animation community. Harmony Gold had a different point of view. Out of respect for the previous work of Tatsunoko, and knowing full well that this story is a true collaboration, there was never any doubt that the key creative visual elements of *The Sentinels* would come from Tatsunoko. This would not be a situation of art for hire. Harmony Gold encouraged, in fact demanded, that the animation have the "look" of the original series. This visual style would be enhanced by a storyline derived from plot elements in the *Robotech* saga.

Buoyed by the enthusiasm felt at the conclusion of these early meetings, Kenji Yoshida, Ippei Kuri, and the others returned to Japan to begin preparations for the production of a sixty-five episode sequel to *Robotech*.

3

ANIMATION PREPRODUCTION JAPANESE STYLE

The process of filmmaking falls into three distinct phases. These phases can be described as pre-production, production and post-production. Distinctions between these aspects of the filmmaking process are obvious when you consider traditional film production. Pre-production is best defined as story and script, storyboard (optional—depending on the type of film being produced), casting, art direction, and set design. In other words, it includes all of the factors which lead up to the actual photography of the film. Production is the actual filming of the script. Post-production includes the editing of sound effects, music, and visual effects, all leading up to a completed film.

In shooting a live-action film, the pre-production and post-production phases are important, but the key factors determining the success of a project rest primarily in the style of the director, the visualizations of the cinematographer, and the spontaneity of the actors. This is not to imply that an exceptional film can be produced without a good script. The best films start with an excellent script. The criteria mentioned above relate to a scenario where all factors are relative, including the original screenplay. In the case of animation the criteria are reversed.

In producing an animated film every factor of sound and picture must be considered before the project can progress. Some animated films try to suspend disbelief. Others try to get by with minimal attention to detail. In considering the type of production which would be accomplished in *Robotech II: The Sentinels,* it was decided at the outset that we would strive for quality and as complete a suspension of disbelief as possible. This meant considering a number of factors which seem almost trivial: What do the characters look like? How tall are they? What kind of clothes do they wear? Do they have blue eyes? Brown hair? Do they walk with a limp? Do they speak with an accent? What will the various environments seen in the film look like? How do the transportation systems function—internal combustion, nuclear power, horse-drawn carriages, magic? What is the relative size and color of the mecha? How will the various scenes and specific movements of the characters and mecha be visualized—lateral movement via proscenium arch direction or dynamic movement through a process of action analysis? What do the machines sound like? What are the particular room ambiences?

All this was considered before the basic storyline of *The Sentinels* was even developed.

The big difference between animation and live-action filmmaking is the fact that in animation everything must be created. The environments, the architecture, anatomical variations, costumes, color schemes, and body language must all be created from scratch. And once the design elements of a particular animated film are in place, the visual syntax of the production must be considered.

In terms of *The Sentinels,* the storyboard became a key factor in determining the cinematic direction of the production. Taking a cue from the plot points, a storyboard artist would construct a visual outline of the proposed action. All of this is a departure from traditional methods of developing and producing animation destined for domestic broadcasting. It was what distinguished the production of *The Sentinels,* from the very beginning, from the rest of the animation glut scheduled for the 1986-87 broadcast season.

When Kenji Yoshida, Ippei Kuri and Hiroshi Iwata arrived in Los Angeles from Tokyo in September 1985, they brought with them a number of drawings and character designs from the unproduced section of *Southern Cross*[4] as well as a complex wooden handmade model of an exotic transformable mega-machine. These were designs they thought might be appropriate for our proposed sequel to *Robotech.* When the

[4] Originally *The Super-Dimensional Cavalry, The Southern Cross* was designed as the showcase of the Tatsunoko Studio. It was planned to cover at least thirty-nine episodes and introduce audiences to images and concepts which would expand on the transformable craze started in *Macross.* Due to a less than rousing response in ratings, *Southern Cross* was stopped after only twenty-three episodes. What remained on the drawing boards was a collection of designs and concepts which would have brought feudal Japan into the nuclear age—Atomic Samurai, Techno Ninja, Bio-mechanical Warlords, etc.

three returned to Tokyo the following month, they took with them a number of books, sketches, and story outlines detailing the first week of programming, which dealt with the launch of the SDF-3 on a mission to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters. These would form the basis of what would eventually become *The Sentinels.*

During the two weeks that the Tatsunoko's creative team was hosted in Los Angeles by Harmony Gold, they received a crash course in "Robotechnology." They learned how *Robotech* differed from their original Japanese series. They also became aware of the direction in which Harmony Gold and Matchbox hoped to take the series. The logic of the plan was well received by the Japanese. The plan was simple—Western storytelling in the Japanese style. Given these basic plot points and concepts particular to the Robotech Universe, Hiroshi Iwata, the line producer for the magnificent theatrical film *Macross Summer '84—Do You Remember Lover,* would begin the character design. The first assignment: age the survivors of the *Macross* series.

Back in Japan, the names Rick Hunter, Lisa Hayes, Max Sterling, and Ben Dixon have little meaning. But *Macross* was such a mega-hit that every animator knew the characters' Japanese names: Hikaru Ichijo, Misa Hayase, Maximillian Genus, Hayao Kakizaki, etc. In producing a sequel to *Robotech*, certain liberties had to be taken with the original Japanese storyline.

When preproduction of *The Sentinels* began, great care was taken to avoid any reference to the original *Macross* storyline. If rumors were to surface that a sequel to *Macross* were being produced, whether true or not, it would have sent shockwaves through the Japanese animation community. There had never been any plans to make a sequel to *Macross*. The driving thought was to produce a sequel to *Robotech.*

To avoid confusion, code names for various characters were established and a variety of character design compromises were made to preserve the sanctity of the original *Macross* universe. The most glaring design compromises took place in regard to the Zentraedi. Breetai and Exedore were not only aged, they were, for all practical purposes, redesigned. This is nothing new for the Japanese animation community. Most of the costumes and several of the original characters and mecha from *Macross* were redesigned during the production of the *Macross* theatrical feature. This redesign was eventually written into the storyline (advancements in cosmetic surgery, familiarity with the concept of fashion, the need to be micronized in order to make the long space journey, special ceremonial costumes, etc.).

In the weeks following their visit to Los Angeles, Hiroshi Iwata, Ippei Kuri, and Kenji Yoshida began to assemble a topnotch Japanese production team for *The Sentinels.* Masaru Shibata was to be the head of the production. Hiroshi Ohnogi and Yuko Tomita were assigned as the scenario writers. Hiroshi Ogawa became planning designer. Hirotoshi Ohkura, Takashi Ono, and a talented staff of artists would design the characters and mecha.[5]

Most of the creative team was pulled together from Tatsunoko's own staff. However, Hiroshi Iwata felt that several key positions

[5] Sometimes the Anglicization of Japanese names generates different spellings—such is the case in the above mentioned names. Hiroshi Ohnogi also can be read as Hiroshi Ohnoki. Takashi Ono can also be interpreted as Takatsugu Ono, etc. Any mistake in regard to names should be considered a translation error rather than an intentional misrepresentation.

should be filled by independent contractors. The scenario writers Ohnogi and Tomita were not on staff at Tatsunoko. Their credits in the field of Japanese animation are legendary. Separately they were responsible for many of the finest animated series produced in Japan including *Z Gundam* and *Aura Battler Dunbine* among others. Tatsunoko considered their willingness to work on *The Sentinels* a major coup in the Japanese animation industry. It was not easy to reserve these talented writers for any project on which they were not involved from the outset. It was even more difficult to get these writers to even consider providing a scenario for a project originated by Americans.

As avid students of animation, Tomita and Ohnogi were well aware of the direction of most animated series produced for U.S. domestic broadcast. They felt that most of the storytelling was juvenile, though that does not necessarily mean bad. The work that they were accustomed to, however, was produced for an older audience. Once aware of the plans constructed by Harmony Gold and Tatsunoko, Tomita and Ohnogi saw the opportunity to work on *The Sentinels* as a major step in the evolution of internationally produced animation.

Before getting into the nuts and bolts concerning the specific preproduction elements of *The Sentinels*, it might be helpful to understand the workings of the Japanese animation industry and the traditional direction of Tatsunoko Studio. In this way, the differences and similarities between Japanese techniques and Western techniques will be more evident.

The Japanese animation industry is best described as a fraternity. It is composed of a group of giant companies (Toei, TMS, Tatsunoko, Nippon Animation) and a number of smaller animation production groups which come together on a project-by-project basis (Idol Co., Nippon Sunrise [now known as Sunrise], MK Productions, Madhouse, Studio Kaname, etc.). Each studio or production group has strong affiliations with one or more of the following: broadcast syndicates and networks, ad agencies, or toy manufacturers.

When a project is determined, the studio which initiated the concept is in control of the production. All the studios compete for precious broadcast commitments. But once these commitments have been made, the rules change dramatically. Regular meetings between the production heads of the major studios and the independent production groups allows the talent pool to be more effective. *Macross* is a prime example of talent pooling. The style and quality of animation differs from episode to episode of this series. This is due to the fact that schedules and workloads often force the originating studio to farm out to competitors, episodes of a particular production. That is why episode twenty-seven of *Macross* looks different from episode twenty-eight.

When the Japanese are producing mainly for their own market their system is relatively stable. But with the recent influx of "work for hire" animation jobs from the fluctuating U.S. domestic syndication market, the workloads of Japanese production companies required "moonlighting" from the large, fraternal, Japanese animation community. That is why DIC Japan might be assigned the task of producing *M.A.S.K.*, but studios such as Toei, Tatsunoko, and even MK Productions end up doing an occasional episode.

Another interesting aspect of Japanese animation is Japan's system of training schools. In defense of the American animation community, it should be noted that Hanna/Barbera has a program in which veteran animators and producers teach

some of the fundamentals of animation. But it is not nearly as complex or thorough as the instruction available in the Japanese system. The Japanese animation studios maintain a trade-school approach to solving the problem of creative attrition. In this way they are able to assure the continuity of talent for their industry. One of the most sophisticated animation schools in Tokyo is maintained by Tatsunoko Studios.

Hundreds of young Japanese artists sit in classrooms day after day learning the fundamentals of animation. As students progress in technical knowledge they graduate to more advanced teaching levels dealing with aesthetics and storytelling. Eventually these students become entry-level apprentice storyboarders, animators, or background artists. The instruction is supported by fees paid by the students.

With this obvious attention to preserving their industry, it is no wonder that the Japanese take their animation seriously. All of the intercultural politicizing between Harmony Gold and Tatsunoko contributed to the uniqueness of the situation regarding the production of *The Sentinels*. Harmony Gold easily could have followed the lead of other American-based animation producers and simply hired Japanese animation studios to complete the work. The results would certainly have been professional. But it would not be inspired. Harmony Gold was interested in pushing the limits of the medium. And with *The Sentinels*, their first *original* production, it was hoped that an infrastructure would be created that would serve as a model for all subsequent coproduction ventures.

While the creative team was being formed in Japan, Koki Narushima, Tatsunoko's director of international business affairs, was in constant contact with John Rocknowski at Harmony Gold and key figures in the Matchbox organization. Production schedules had to be determined. Broadcast airdates had to be tentatively set. Toy designers had to meet with animation designers. The concept was simple—gear up to produce several minutes of animation featuring the cast and new mecha designs for Matchbox to introduce at the 1986 Toy Fair. The Toy Fair is an annual event held in New York during the early weeks of February to introduce the retail toy trade to current offerings from all of the major toy companies. In the real world business cannot wait for art. Koki Narushima also served as the liaison between the creative teams. His constant request from the creative team at Tatsunoko: what is the story?

Representatives from Harmony Gold were to fly into Tokyo for an extended stay in November 1985 to become part of the production team. But prior to this, considerations regarding storylines and the introduction of new characters and mecha had to be resolved with Matchbox. Several trips to New Jersey to meet with the research and development team at Matchbox brought some startling facts to the forefront. It was determined that transformability was losing ground as an asset for stand-alone toys. What seemed more long-lasting was a toy idea which would allow for manipulation and metamorphosis without the stigma of transformation.

These concepts began to create the initial story direction of *The Sentinels*. The story began to take shape. It would be a story of liberators traveling from planet to planet freeing citizens from the oppressive grip of the Invid. This would give the animation and toy designers an opportunity to create a variety of vehicles and characters suited for different terrains and environments. The consensus from Matchbox was direct and to the point. They had made an investment in the tooling costs for

the toys they planned to introduce into their line in 1986. They wanted this investment to be carried over into any decisions about new and exotic mecha and characters. They also realized that any new toys would come from the story. They understood that by making toys in this manner, as opposed to designing toys and then forcing them into the scripts, there would be continuity with the original series. The end result would be that popular elements of the new material would ultimately be translated into toys for 1987. Not every element of *The Sentinels* would end up as a toy. This was good because it would free up the animation design group to create an entire storehouse of items which did not have to be rooted in practical design criteria. Matchbox's position was to be aware of the creative direction taken by Tatsunoko and Harmony Gold and make suggestions to enhance play value in the event that an item later surfaced as a toy. Someone during one product development session casually mentioned the possibility of producing a "plush line," similar to Popples or the Care Bears for *Robotech*. Matchbox was already breaking new ground by attempting to create a line of dolls for girls from elements of Robotech. So from this anecdotal footnote to a product design meeting, the "Children of Zor" became a problem-solving issue which would later be resolved through storytelling.

Meetings such as this were valuable. But time was running out for all parties if any significant amount of animation was going to be designed and fully realized by Toy Fair—less than 120 days away.

While the plot points were being worked, Hirotoshi Ohkura and his staff started the task of character and mechanical designs. Working from a rudimentary plot outline, they began the time-consuming process of re-aging and re-clothing the returning characters from *Robotech*. Much of their preliminary work evolved into elements which were eventually used in *The Sentinels*. The first selection of artwork came from the unrealized portions of *Southern Cross* and a selection of characters and mecha from *Robotech IV* (Tatsunoko's initial code name for *The Sentinels*.) Initial art direction came from a variety of sources.

One of those directions was a series of illustrations by the celebrated children's book author Jodell Abrams. Ms. Abrams had worked for a number of American toy companies designing graphics for presentations and advertising purposes. Her response and interpretations of new directions based on her initial exposure to the animation designs, brought over by Hiroshi Iwata in October, gave the Ohkura design group a better understanding of the direction that was intended for *The Sentinels*. Although Jodell Abrams' "storybook" approach to the design problems faced by the producers was not incorporated into the final look of the series, it got the Japanese designers thinking in more lush and exotic terms.

The goal was to try and transcend the typical "sanitary" look of the future popularized in such films as *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Star Trek*, and *Space 1999*. The goal was to try and get away from nuclear power, protoculture power, etc. Why not have alternative forms of transportation and intergalactic life—just so long as a thread of logical suspension of disbelief could be maintained. Why not power a spaceship with a highly advanced steam turbine engine which could generate enough thrust to push a big metal behemoth through the void of space? How about sailing vessels drawn by the forces of magnetism across the endless reaches of space? The possibility of incorporating organic and "inorganic"

lifeforms would also give room for interesting design solutions. Why not explore the metaphysics and religious doctrines of the various civilizations which would populate the numerous worlds visited during *The Sentinels?*

Whatever way you looked at it, the task was astronomical. Fortunately, the staff at Tatsunoko had a good feeling for the project and rushed headlong into the difficult task of visually realizing seventy major characters and mecha designs and preliminarily creating lush environments for them to exist in.

One of the first jobs was to determine what mecha would be recycled into *The Sentinels.* Following the few "mandates" specified by Matchbox, certain mecha from *Southern Cross* (Bioroids, Veritech Hover Tanks, AJAX Space Fighters, Logan Drone Bomber) and Mospeada (Veritech Alpha / Beta Fighters, Invid Scouts, Shocktroopers, Enforcers, etc.) were to be used to save on potential tooling costs and to take advantage of existing Matchbox toys. This would account for approximately fifty percent of the mecha. Another point on Matchbox's production "wishlist" was the incorporation of ground-based wheeled vehicles to complement and balance out the large number of winged vehicles seen in the original *Robotech* series. Tatsunoko's original design for a multi-system transformable ground-based unit—a sort of *Macross* on wheels—eventually was scaled down and transformed into a mega-vehicle known as the Ground-based Mobile Unit—GMU.

A number of smaller personal transport systems were also developed. Some were extremely primitive on a technological level. Taking a cue from some the unused "samurai" designs from *Southern Cross,* the Japanese came up with a ceremonial mechanical winged horse to be used by the "cavalry" (tank crews). This ceremonial mecha would be able to break down into multi-function component parts. Prototype Cyclones also needed to be designed.

A major question everyone had was the ultimate design of the SDF-3. This had to be answered for a number of reasons, not all of them relating to the production of *The Sentinels.* Comico was about to begin pre-production on their *Robotech Graphic Novel.* And since the SDF-3 was supposed to look like Zor's original ship—a ship pictured in the graphic novel—a design had to be agreed upon in a relatively short time. The approach was to ask the artists at Tatsunoko to visualize the original ship seen in the first few seconds of the first episode of *Robotech* before it is redesigned by the United Earth Government—bearing in mind that the ship is supposed to be of either Zentraedi or Robotech Masters' origin. What eventually surfaced was a combination of styles from *Macross* and *Southern Cross.* The SDF-3 was designed as a sleek-non-transformable, biomechanical super dreadnought.

Other design elements and the visual realization of specific characters would have to wait until the group from Harmony Gold—headed by Ahmed Agrama and myself—would set up shop in Tokyo for the duration of the preproduction phase.

The Tokyo base of operations for Harmony Gold during the preproduction phase of *The Sentinels* was the New Otani Hotel. Throughout November 1985, this mega-hotel would serve as a meeting place and business environment adjunct to Tatsunoko's business office, studio, and animation school. Computers, word processors, telefax facilities, etc. were set up to interface with the Tatsunoko system.

The initial meeting which took place at Tatsunoko's main busi-

ness address was a unique experience. Seated around a conference table in a penthouse meeting room were some of the most talented artists and writers of the Japanese animation industry. Hiroshi Ohnoki, one of the writers chosen to work on the project, was dressed in a traditional, feudal Japanese formal robe. It was a gesture of respect and an indication of the importance that was given to this project.

A booklet prepared by the Tatsunoko production team entitled "Production Plan for Robotech Masters," written in both Japanese and English, was handed out at this initial meeting. The booklet began with a simple prayer asking for guidance and inspiration. In the following pages the scenario writers and key production personnel engaged by Tatsunoko began by explaining their "understanding" of *Robotech*. They followed this introduction with a possible scenario which would carry the *Robotech* story into bold new worlds.

The concepts introduced were well presented, through interpreters, and were a starting point in the evolution of *The Sentinels*. The major weakness in Tatsunoko's original production plan was one of inter-cultural awareness on the part of the scenario writers. They were trying to relate *The Sentinels* to *Macross, Southern Cross,* and *Mospeada*. The writers could not understand what the differences were between the Robotech Masters and the citizens on Tyrol. The need to give power to the citizens of Tyrol—due to statements that the major villains in *Robotech* were the Robotech Masters—was a major point of contention. The writers were trying to construct a more complex story than need be, concentrating the majority of the sixty-five episodes on the battle for control of Tyrol.

As the discussions became more agitated a blackboard was called in. Through diagrams and simple charts the hierarchy of *Robotech* was detailed first hand. The relationship (however slight) between the original Japanese storyline and *Robotech* was brought out into the open and resolved. The net result was the fact that now the Japanese team realized through first-hand communication that *Robotech* and ultimately *The Sentinels* were completely different, original stories. This realization was important if things were going to progress past the talking stage. After this initial meeting everyone was ready for lunch. When we returned from lunch the art staff promised to have a series of *new* drawings ready for our comment.

This first meeting, frustrations and all, was a valuable lesson. It indicated an even more important difference between Japanese animated storytelling and U.S. domestic syndication. In Japan the shows are broadcast on a weekly basis. This is similar to the way in which U.S. networks run Saturday morning children's television. Differences (serialized stories, prime time audience exposure, etc.) aside, it was apparent that the rhythm of producing programming for daily strip syndication had not entered the discussion. The Japanese were not used to producing material which would be shown every day. This exposure for five days a week posed certain limitations on the storytelling. The Japanese team not only had to familiarize themselves with the specifics of a complex story, they also had to redirect their thinking to production of animation to be broadcast daily.

As far as the Japanese storytellers were concerned, it was better to take time to develop characters before introducing too much plot into the early episodes (bear in mind that the Japanese team had not come to the realization that the complexities of the

plot had already been laid out in the original *Robotech* series). They had great confidence in the storyline, noting that it contained elements that would make it an "exciting space opera for children of all ages throughout the world." They wanted to do things right. Following the initial meeting at Tatsunoko's corporate offices, a meeting was held in which positive and negative feedback surfaced regarding the direction of the production. Everyone realized that *The Sentinels* would not be a "cut and dry" project—an easy production to design and complete.

The hardest concept to deal with during this preproduction phase was the basic philosophy between American and Japanese consumer-oriented television programming. Anyone engaged in producing animation for television broadcast, at one time or another, will be faced with the question of compromise. The Japanese approach is to solve the problem internally. It is an organic solution. The Western approach is to place artificial limitations on the structure of the story. It is the "Madison Avenue" route to a solution. And although the Japanese are masters at the art of manufacturing and selling, they must first *know* the industry they are attempting to sell into.

The Japanese animation community has a very pedestrian knowledge of U.S. domestic television syndication. For that matter, most of the people involved in domestic television syndication have a pedestrian knowledge of the subject. But in trying to produce the basic production outline for *The Sentinels*, the Tatsunoko team kept falling into the trap of trying to understand the nature of U.S. syndication broadcast standards. They wanted to tell the story as though it were to be broadcast in Japan. The redirection and education of the team was difficult and often less than civil. Everyone was feeling the pressures of time. Ultimately the budget would have to reflect this extended period of adjustment.

The solution of the problem of *The Sentinels* was relatively simple. Every day certain questions about story and characters were raised. Every night the answers would be written and then "faxed" to Tatsunoko so they could be translated into Japanese. By 10:00 AM the following day everyone was familiar with the questions and answers that arose the previous day. At the same time the Japanese scenario writers demanded to "know the story"—this required additional writing following the daily twelve-hour brainstorming sessions which took place at the Tatsunoko corporate offices. What evolved was a series of weekly synopses, telling the basic story of *The Sentinels*, and as complete a description of the environments and major characters as time would allow.

Graced with more information, Ohkura's design team would provide new and updated model sheets. Literally hundreds of model sheets, size comparison charts, "turnarounds," key backgrounds, etc. flooded past bloodshot eyes during the three weeks of preproduction. The direction and appropriateness of these drawings would be discussed. Once they passed our criteria they were catalogued and forgotten about for the time being.

The storyboard for the initial episodes also had to be rendered. The first board was relatively simple seeing that there were no approved designs to give the storyboard artists.

There were two goals to be accomplished during this preproduction phase. One was to create a "bible" which would have as many key renderings and model sheets as possible. The other was to agree on a basic story which would then be turned over to the

Japanese scenario writers to turn into sixty-five scripts.

The production of the artwork moved swiftly. The initial scripts did not progress as rapidly. The interfacing between the "constructed" timeline in *Robotech* and the proposed timeline in *The Sentinels* was virtually impossible to reconcile with the Japanese writers. They were not willing to reintroduce the familiar characters like Rick Hunter and Lisa Hayes into the early episodes (regardless of the need for continuity). They felt compelled to focus on the new characters—Jack Baker, Karen Penn, Rem, Cabell. Perhaps it was an unconscious reaction to dealing with characters protracted from *Macross*. Whatever the reason, the initial scripts written by the scenario writers chosen by Tatsunoko were far afield from what everyone was expecting for a sequel to *Robotech*. It was and still is my own personal opinion that the Japanese intended to take footage from *The Sentinels* and reedit it to create a new program—without the characters from *Macross*—and present it for broadcast in Japan. In viewing the final animation, more attention to detail can be seen in the scenes featuring Jack Baker and the battles on the homeworld of the Robotech Masters. The scenes with Rick, Lisa, and Minmei were relatively pedestrian—also these scenes did not follow the model sheets. It is difficult to say with certainty if this was the case seeing that the full production was never completed and communications were broken off with many of the Japanese writers and designers before these questions could be asked.

The only solution was to return to Los Angeles and construct the scripts with American writers. These scripts with a series of sample storyboards would be forwarded to Tatsunoko for comment and then put into production.

With this new direction, a creative team was assembled in Los Angeles to form the core of material needed to facilitate the production of *The Sentinels*. Kent Butterworth, a veteran storyboard artist and writer, was hired as script supervisor. Kevin Altieri, Paul Power, and Butterworth began storyboarding initial scripts written by myself to illustrate the direction in which the stories should go. A group of science fiction authors, including Arthur Byron Cover, Steve Barnes, John Shirley, Richard Mueller and Steve Roberts, were brought in to write dialogue and construct scenarios from my plot points. Walt Kubiak, Eric Bernstein, and Duane Capizzi rounded out the writing pool.

For six weeks this group would meet to discuss the plot and receive script assignments.

The initial scripts for the first six episodes were written prior to the assembly of the creative team in Los Angeles in order to give the animators in Tokyo something to work on so that some animation could be presented at the 1986 toy fair. The process was slightly different from traditional American animation, which uses prerecorded voice tracks to guide the animation. The production technique we adopted was to provide dialogue and specific timing for the individual scenes and allow the animators as much freedom as possible to create an interesting visualization of the storyboard.

The storyboards for the scripts were done in Tokyo and Los Angeles. All of the storyboard

[5] Storyboarding is a key tool in advertising and the horizontal boards are standard in the advertising world. These horizontal boards were adopted by animation production companies and there was no reason to change to another system. The Japanese relate to their storyboards as visualization of the completed film. Their vertical boards have the actual feel of the film. They are more versatile and give a more accurate projection of the final film.

artists agreed to follow the vertical five-panel-per-page layout

adopted by the Japanese. This method differs from the more traditional horizontal storyboards used by all American animation production companies.[6] (Interestingly enough, oftentimes when American companies provide storyboards for Japanese animation companies to work on they send their boards using the traditional horizontal storyboard templates. The Japanese studios then hire assistants to cut out the panels and paste them into a more workable vertical template.) Some of the western artists had difficulty in redirecting their sense of direction to the vertical storyboard. But once the initial confusion had worn off artists like Altieri were able to turn out remarkably detailed boards—boards which, according to the Japanese production staff, literally "cried" to be animated.

This process was unique and, ultimately, time consuming. The result was, according to Kent Butterworth, "probably the single greatest creative effort in the production of animation for domestic syndication."

While everyone involved in the process was waiting for the first results of the animation to arrive from Japan, another aspect of the preproduction phase had to be started.

George Bours, in charge of creating the special sound effects and ambience needed for *The Sentinels* at Intersound, was given the production bible and sketchbooks of model sheets. It was his responsibility to create new sounds for such creatures as the Inorganics, the cougars, and all the different mecha used by the REF and eventually The Sentinels.

Meanwhile music had to be composed and arranged. Actors had to be auditioned. Dialogue directors had to be contracted. Foley artists had to be located. Studio time had to be allocated for the editing and postproduction work.

4

ANIMATION IN THE JAPANESE STYLE

Given the necessity of producing a certain amount of animation, and taking for granted the fact that, creative differences aside, Tatsunoko was geared up for the assignment, the "go-ahead" was given by Matchbox and Harmony Gold to begin animation on the *Sentinels* project.

Traditionally, the steps which must be followed to produce animation are universal: storyboard, voice recording, scene layout, background painting, animation, pencil tests, cel painting, and finally sequential photography. It is not surprising that the Japanese have

modified this system. The modifications make sense given the speed in which most animation is produced in Japan. Along with these system modifications the Japanese animation industry has adopted standards for television productions which conserve time and budget.

Before getting into the specifics of these modifications, it may prove instructive to compare the standards adopted by Tatsunoko for the production of animation geared for Japanese television broadcast. In the U.S., most animation is photographed on 35mm stock. The majority of Japanese animation is produced on 16mm. The larger area of the 35mm frame gives animators the notion that the animation will look better utilizing a standard twelve field cel. This results in a standard cel with the approximate dimension of 11" x 14". It is also interesting to note that most animated feature films produced in the United States prefer to use a 16 field (approximate dimension 15" x 18") in order to achieve better detail and give the animator more freedom of movement. The difference is obvious when one considers the fact that animation produced for television is destined to be viewed on a small screen made up of electronic "pixels" of color while the theatrical film is projected larger than life in a darkened movie theater. But a qualitative criterion based solely on film frame size is a relative factor. The Japanese prefer to use an 8" field as their standard for television production. This gives a relative cel which is approximately the size of a sheet of notebook paper. Less cel means less paint which eventually means less money. It also means less space in terms of storage. Also most television stations in Japan have 16mm film-chains which allow them to broadcast directly from film as opposed to the videotape operations preferred in the States.

When Japanese studios such as Tatsunoko are commissioned to produce animation for eventual broadcast in the United States, they are required, by contract, to photograph the animation on 35mm. When Tatsunoko produces animation for their own television market they choose 16mm. (When producing theatrical animated features the Japanese use 35mm.)

Another standard which has been adopted by many Japanese animation studios is bi-pack film. In simple terms, bi-pack film allows filmmakers an opportunity to do inexpensive optical work in the camera with film that has twin emulsions which can be exposed at different times and with different exposure levels.

Even the method of photographing cels and background takes on a new twist with the "floating platten" approach adopted by the Japanese animation community. This technique allows for specific scenes to be photographed in such a way that the platten (the glass plate which holds the animation in place) is connected to the camera body as opposed to the animation stand. In this way the actual cel animation can be moved at a specific focal distance from the camera while the entire scene is moved away from a specific background. It is a simple solution/substitute for the more complex method of producing animation using the multi-plane technique. It has a powerful visual impact which differentiates many of the action scenes found in Japanese animation.

It is typical of the Japanese to study a system and then apply knowledge and ingenuity to improve it. This was the case with the production of animation for television. With the above mentioned techniques, the Japanese were able to compete and eventually become world leaders in the production of animation. Combined with the high level of

design skills and the unique approach to directorial problem-solving which allows television programs to be produced with less than half the usual number of cels, the Japanese created a winning combination.

A typical episode of *Robotech* used well under five thousand cels and two hundred background paintings. A typical episode of *He-Man* or *G.I. Joe* uses, on the average, ten to twelve thousand cels. The difference is in the direction of the animation and the careful use and re-use of cels.

One of the biggest myths expounded by detractors of Japanese animation is its heavy reliance on limited animation.

Careful examination of original cel art from any typical Japanese animated program reveals a strong reliance on full animation.

Limited animation describes a technique in which body parts of various characters are layered on separate cels. If an animated character is walking through a cartoon which is produced using limited animation techniques the body is drawn only once, the legs and arms are drawn separately and overlaid on top of the body to indicate movement. This technique was perfected by the Hanna/Barbera studio to break into the television market with original low cost animation (classic examples are *Rough and Ready* and *Yogi Bear*). Done correctly the technique does save time for the animator—it also is a showcase for the voice actor and the writers because the strength of these cartoons rests solely in the personality of the characters and the situations that they find themselves in.

Most people associated limited animation with the Japanese. The association is incorrect.

Japanese animation is best described as full animation with a limited number of cels.

It's strange situation but limited animation generates many more cels than full animation—with each character relegated to a separate cel or series of cels per frame. A major drawback to limited animation is the concept of color changes which occur due to the number of levels of cel acetate needed to construct a full image of a particular character. Often the most telltale sign of limited animation comes when you can easily notice that the color of the legs and arms of a character like Yogi Bear differ from his head and body. The more cels are stacked, the duller the color of the bottom cels become when photographed. One of the reasons for limited animation comes from the fact that characters are asked to walk and talk at the same time.

The Japanese have overcome this stigma. Most of the time the character walks, stops and then talks. In this way the director can call for the recycling of fully animated cels to allow characters to engage in conversations. It is quite possible for a five second scene to be produced, following this technique, with a minimum number of cels. Most animated films are photographed with twelve separate cel/background set-ups per second—each set-up is photographed for two frames. Following the math out for a sequence in which two characters talk in a typical non-Japanese cartoon, a five second scene could use up 120 cels (five seconds x twelve cels per second x two characters). A typical Japanese scene could produce the same results with thirty to forty cels (there are only four or five separate mouth movements combined with a few gestures per character). The result is fully animated. Often the Japanese combine characters on the same cel to cut down on the number of actual cels used in a given episode. This conservation of cels is important when one considers the attention to detail lavished on

most action sequences.

Most of this analysis of animation can be directly attributed to the director. In Japan animation is conceptualized as pure cinema. Techniques which deal with concepts such as action analysis and character movement are studied and improved upon constantly.

In a typical *Scooby Doo* cartoon the animation director works with timing and movement. But much of the groundwork is done by the time it gets to the animation phase. The storyboard and later the layout drawings form the basis of the actual animation. And unless there are unlimited time and very deep pockets behind the production there is very little room for deviation from the plan outline in these production templates. Combined with the fact that the voices are recorded in advance, the animation director is little more than a supervisor. The director's main function is to make sure that all the elements "match up" when everything is finally assembled. Pencil tests assure the director that the animation of mouth movement matches the pre-recorded voices. The director must hope that the timing of the scenes keeps to the rigid voice track which is the backbone of the production.

Japanese animation directors, on the other hand, are problem solvers. They work directly from the storyboard and scenario to create the actual animation. There is no layout phase. There is no pencil test phase. The test for correctness of movement is done via *disposable* video animation set-ups similar to the Lyon/Lamb system used by many animators in the States. The only difference is that the Japanese *do not keep* the pencil tests as a record of their work. If it moves well it is sent to be inked and painted. If it doesn't move well—it's back to the drawing board.

One of the advantages of this style of animation is the visual integrity which results from the process. Without relying on the "colorization" of scripts by voice actors working from character sketches and storyboards, the director is able to set the pace and visual style of the scene. The storyboard is an outline. The scenario is a guide.

Working in this manner, a first for international coproductions destined for initial broadcast in the United States, it was imperative that Harmony Gold rely on the skills and techniques of the Japanese scenario writers. Harmony Gold's staff of writers could provide the dialogue and the plot points and occasional storyboard, but it would be presumptuous to assume that anyone could assimilate the Japanese directorial style and point of view needed to complete the assignments.

When the cartoon programs are written in the States, the writer tries to visualize every aspect of the film. Once approved by producers and clients, this script is given to storyboard artists to translate to film. In most cases the storyboard artist is torn between boarding the script as written or adapting the script into something that has visual integrity. It is a constant struggle, which points to the inadequacies of the current system adopted by the majority of the animation houses in the States. The concept is to homogenize the end result and eliminate "auteurship."

Certain small groups working within this restrictive system have managed to transcend these limitations. Most notable is the group headed by Richard Rainus and Kevin Altieri working at DIC. Their efforts on *Kid Video*, the network *Ghostbusters* series, and currently *Alf* is a testament to their commitment to quality animation. Efforts such as this are few and far between. Interestingly enough, much of Altieri and Rainus' animation is eventually turned over to

some of the best animation houses in Japan for completion.

Directorial "style" in most animation originating in the United States means long pans across uninspired landscapes or overblown, intruding logos to indicate scene changes. This technique uses up valuable air time. It is one of the classic "cheats" which ultimately gives animation a bad name—"bad" in terms of cinematic direction. Brad Bird's ambitious "Family Dog" segment of Speilberg's *Amazing Stories,* with designs by Tim *(Vincent* and *Pee Wee's Big Adventure)* Burton, shows what can be accomplished given the proper creative environment. For the most part the visual aspects of contemporary domestically produced animation has fallen into a rut. The result is, using Chuck Jones words, "little more than illustrated radio."

The Sentinels was planned, from the outset, to break new ground. The actual direction was divided into two distinct areas. These directorial chores can best be differentiated as scene-by-scene animation (accomplished in Tokyo under the supervision of Ippei Kuri) and cinematic direction (accomplished in Los Angeles by myself).

Ippei Kuri and his staff of directors were given the task of animating the various scenes which made up the stories. Their responsibilities included believable movement, adherence to model sheets, proper relationship between characters and backgrounds (so the characters appear to be "in" the scene and not "on" the scene—one of the major problems facing traditional 2-D animation), character body language, screen direction, and interaction between characters. Kuri's staff had to be aware of matching character movement from scene to scene, but the actual final cut of the film and shot sequence would be handled in Los Angeles.

A unique situation of timing individual scenes was constructed by Kent Butterworth, Ahmed Agrama, and myself to allow for the production of the animation without a scratch track. Known as producing film MOS ("Mitt Out Sound"—a strange reference to the early days of Hollywood's "talking pictures" directed by east European immigrants who chose to shoot certain scenes without turning the microphone on). Using the storyboards, the character movements and resultant speeches were timed down to the frame so that they could be translated into animation drawings. It is almost like doing an "exposure sheet" in advance for movement as well as speech pattern. The exposure sheet is traditionally done by directors with a prerecorded track which allows the animator to pinpoint the actual frame in which a character is supposed to make a particular mouth shape. This advance exposure sheet, tied to the storyboard, was a the most important tool to facilitate the trans-Pacific production.

Most of the communications during the animation phase was facilitated via telefax and telex. Without this technology the production could not have been realized. At one point it was proposed that the actual pencil drawings be faxed to Los Angeles for approval. Fortunately this scheme was nipped in the bud. If a professional animation studio like Tatsunoko didn't know how to animate characters correctly by this time, then nothing would help the situation no matter how many images were transmitted back and forth across the Pacific. This was a situation in which mutual trust won out over backseat driving. Harmony Gold had so much faith in the ability of Tatsunoko to produce quality animation combined with the new prototype digital film transfer computers modified by Intersound's chief

engineer Bryan Rusenko, that a policy of *no retakes* was adopted by both companies. This meant that, given the professionalism of Tatsunoko's work, what Intersound received was what Intersound would use.

On average, a good animator can churn out two to four seconds of animation per day. At this pace it would take somewhere in the neighborhood of 2,640 manhours to complete the animation for a single half-hour episode (a half-hour episode is actually twenty-two minutes of actual program time). Certain animators are better at conceptualizing organic movement. Others find themselves in their element when it comes to animating mecha. The best animation producers and directors "orchestrate" their animators to take advantage of their particular skills.

Occasionally, schedules demand that students and apprentices be used to take up the slack in the production chain. Most production schedules call for individual episodes of animated programming geared for U.S. syndicated television to be completed in one week. At this rate sixty or more animators and assistants must devote their attention to the assignment.

This tight schedule also includes the production of backgrounds. The actual number of backgrounds needed per episode varies. The ideal number of backgrounds is somewhere around 225. Some television series such as *G.I. Joe* or *Transformers* require 300 or more backgrounds. To the Japanese this is wasteful. It requires more labor and is not necessarily the optimum use of the talent available.

The method in which the backgrounds are completed is unique. A team of artists create "key background" paintings. These paintings detail the major locations which are needed throughout the series. Once these key backgrounds are completed they are made available for the background painters who must discuss with the director the specific needs of individual scenes. Once they understand the direction of the scene, spatial distance, camera angle, field size, camera movement, and time of day, they refer to the "key backgrounds" and paint a specific scene from a particular point of view to meet the requirements of the given shot.

Cel paintings is a two-step process. The images which appear on the approved pencil drawings must be transferred to a clear acetate cel. The Japanese use a system called thermafax transfer, which speeds up the process of cel inking. There are two other methods of getting the animated image onto the cel. The most time-consuming is hand-inking. The method used by most animators requires sending the pencil drawings through a specially modified photocopier which electronically copies and then chemically bonds the image onto a cel. The most aesthetically pleasing method with the most potential is the hand-inked process. In this method the animation can have colored outlines which relate directly to the actual color scheme of the character. The other methods are limited by the chemical process to a few colors. And until only recently the only color available was black.

A virtual army of painters are employed to finish the cels. This phase of the animation process is more "industrial" than artistic. It is the most labor intensive phase of the entire process. The cells are painted on the side opposite that which will *ultimately* face the camera. This is done to take advantage of the cel paint. In order to add individuality to the cels, a certain number of them are painted on the top (using a technique known as front edge painting). This is usually done by an

airbrush artist or a technical painter who reinks the black character outline to add more detail, special effects, or a sense of realism.

Once individual scenes were animated, cels and backgrounds painted, and the entire sequence photographed, it was shipped to Intersound for the second phase of "direction" and ultimate assembly.

This phase of production was relatively complex. One reason being that animation had never been done this way before. For another reason, the constraints of time forced correct decisions to be made the first time. The end results, however, were well worth the trouble. The tagged shots which referred to scene numbers from the storyboard were reviewed. The pace of the scene was examined. The movement of the characters, the actual length of the "speeches," the framing, and so forth, were considered as variable factors. With Rusenko's system all of the elements of animation could be modified with the exception of the actual character design and choreographed movements. The final result would be a completely digital record of the animation transferred to one-inch video tape.

Using a modified Bosch telecine converter with digital frame storage capacity and variable speed transfer, the time-consuming process of assembly began. The shots were often "lengthened" or "shortened" electronically. Various sequences were modified by finding key cels and repeating frames to lengthen or shorten speeches. Different field sizes could be accommodated using a digital video effects generator (this could only be done to a limited degree before tiling caused the image to appear out of focus). Shots were assembled out of original sequence. Shots were flipped on horizontal axis and repeated.

The process was similar to editing a live-action film. Filming the animation MOS allowed me total freedom in assembling the footage for maximum visual impact. Trying to explain the process to a room full of animators left the majority of artists with open mouths and blank expressions on their faces. The reason for creating this new production technique was to take advantage of the short turnaround time needed to produce animation for the grueling schedules of syndicated programming while maintaining a high standard of production. This process could also take advantage of all sorts of electronic effects (dissolves, wipes, etc.) in the final assembly of the visual portion of production.

Each shot was also color corrected and checked for quality of brightness and video signal. The final result was a first generation film to tape transfer production. The final animation did not exist on film—only on video tape. It was a first. Once the producers and directors were satisfied with the visual material it was turned over to the production team at Intersound to add music, sound effects, and a dialogue track.

At this point in the production of *The Sentinels*, the eighty-five minutes of completed footage that arrived from Japan was assembled into individual episodes. The first three episodes of *The Sentinels* were assembled and edited. The dialogue writers had been assigned. The roles had been cast. The music composers had been selected. The staff in Los Angeles was waiting for the rest of the footage to arrive. The first eight episodes were in storyboard form and the entire body of sixty-five scripts had been written and sent over to Tokyo to be processed by the writing staff at Tatsunoko. It seemed as though everything was going as planned.

These plans would soon change.

5

POSTPRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Postproduction is a catchall phrase which describes the final stages of production in the motion-picture industry. It includes the editing process, the audio mix, special visual effects, and any minor "repairs" or enhancements which may be required before the final print is delivered.

In terms of traditional animation, once all the artwork is finished and the principal photography is complete, the majority of the work is done. Bear in mind that, in traditional animation production, the voice tracks are recorded prior to the animation to provide a guide for the animators. Therefore, the concept of postproduction, as defined above, has little meaning in terms of animated films. Editing is basically nothing more than the assembly of shots in sequence. Often, editing of traditional films requires indications for dissolves—the actual dissolve is an optical process done in a lab. During the filming of animated sequences, it is possible that dissolves and

double exposures (reflections, etc.) can be done in camera. In most instances, that is even preferable. The animation cameraman has more control over the scene when the optical effects can be done in camera.

If the storyboard and model sheets are followed correctly, it is highly unlikely that there will be out-takes. Thus, the concept of editing, a major part of traditional motion-picture postproduction activity, often plays a minor role.

However, as must be apparent by this time, *The Sentinels* was conceptualized and produced in a nontraditional manner. This being the case, the postproduction phase was certain to live up to the high standards and criteria of "quality" already established for this projected ground-breaking approach to animated programming.

A key phase in the postproduction of this particular production was the actual editing of the raw, unenhanced footage which arrived from Japan.

The animated sequences of the various episodes filmed in Japan were delivered to the one-inch videotape editing facility at Intersound as a collection of independent, numbered shots separated by slugs of film. They were delivered on 16mm and in a sequence which matched the storyboards provided by the staff artists at Harmony Gold at Tatsunoko. However, upon initial inspection of the footage, it was determined that the actual sequence of shots, the "syntax of the film" did not take full advantage of the material. It was decided at this point that the actual sequence of shots should be rearranged to enhance the cinematic aspects of the finished animation. Also, given a tight delivery schedule, which ruled out the possibility of retakes, certain scenes had to be eliminated due to painting mistakes or inappropriate character gesture or movement.

Often, the timing was not correct, Again, there was no possibility to ask for a retake. In these instances, a newly timed version of the original scene would have to be recreated *digitally* on the Bosch Tele-Cine Converter by Guillermo Coehlo and myself. In these situations, individual scenes would be analyzed mathematically and rephotographed during the initial transfer to one-inch videotape. The amount of time that individual "held cels" would appear on screen would be expanded or condensed. Held cels are particular cels within a scene in which a character does not move. The mouth is generally closed and the eyes are generally open. It is the basic area in the animation which relates to the pause between words of dialogue. The actual pattern and arrangement of cels would be altered. Specific cels would be repeated or eliminated in order to make a scene work. It was a time-consuming process which, to some, might seem impossible or unnecessary. It is a luxury that no other animated film could sustain due to the budgetary considerations of on-line video editing costs. Intersound was fortunate to maintain their own professional facility which made the concept of reanimating this footage a reality.

This process would have been next to impossible had the final voice tracks been recorded in advance. But since we were working with silent footage—no dialogue and no sound effects—it was not disastrous or unreasonable to rearrange the material to suit the requirements of the director's vision.

This possibility was accomplished by a prototype interface designed by Bryan Rusenko, Intersound's chief engineer. He was able to create a "black box" which linked the tele-cine converter directly to the one-inch videotape recorder as a controllable source. Normally, levels

would be set and the transfer accomplished in one pass. Any alterations take place in the video editing phase. The final result is a generation removed from the original transfer. Rusenko's device eliminated the need to make an initial transfer before the editing was possible. It also allowed the original source (the 16mm film) to be manipulated during the initial transfer process. The variables were speed and frame assembly. Film usually runs at twenty-four frames per second. In *The Sentinels*, the animation was paced on a shot-by-shot basis at speeds which varied from twelve to forty-eight frames per second. The digital capabilities of the Bosch computer system which ran the tele-cine converter allowed for adjustment to a tenth of a frame per second. Combined with the concept of digital frame storage and the ability to have frame (and video field) accurate editing a completely new version of the finished animation emerged following the editing process.

Another fringe benefit of this system was the ability to "color correct" and adjust video levels for the footage on a shot-by-shot basis. The Bosch system also provides for grain reduction and image enhancement. With these options selected, the original 16mm footage eventually appears like 35mm film following the "initial transfer"/editing process.

Once everyone was satisfied with the syntax of this final video version, the one-inch videotape master is duplicated onto three-quarter-inch or one-half-inch videotape cassettes with a visible time-code window. This window, superimposed over the animation, is the key which allows the production to come together. It shows frame-accurate reference marks which indicate elapsed hours, minutes, and seconds throughout the completed film by reading an electronic code recorded on a dedicated track on the video tape master. All of the various artists and technicians who will work on the project will now be able to keep everything in sync thanks to the visual time code (VTC).

Typically, the copy of this video worktape is sent to the foley artist, Ossama Khuluki. Another copy is sent to George Bours, the sound effects and music editor, and yet another copy, along with the original scripted dialogue, is sent to Ardwight Chamberlain, the automated dialogue replacement writer and recording session director. And time permitting, a final copy is sent to Harmony Gold's music division in order to give the selected composers visual cues in order to draft additional music for the production.

The work of a good foley artist is hard to describe. The concept of foley is simple—a person or group of persons are responsible for creating sound effects which relate to specific actions performed by characters which are seen on screen. Someone walking over gravel; clapping hands; high heels on marble; fingernails scratching a chalkboard; dialing a telephone . . . you get the message. The difficult thing is describing the methods by which the foley artist accomplishes his goals.

In the case of *The Sentinels*, Ossama views the film and writes a foley script (referenced to specific locations on the video tape via the visual time code). This foley script indicates the various physical sounds that the characters enact or react to on screen. Then the foley artist enters a foley stage and begins to create sounds in sync to the movement on screen.

Traditional foley stages have a number of small "pits" which contain material which the foley artist can walk on. Generally pits contain gravel, broken glass, marble, hardwood, metal and coarse sand. The rest of the foley

stage is littered with all manner of junk. Anything which will produce sounds. Often strange objects are used to approximate legitimate sounds. Coconut shells for horse hoofs, etc.

A good foley artist is like a cross between a "Spike Jones" musician and a mime. To watch a foley artist create sounds is a real experience. The artist is constantly watching the screen and his script at the same time. He is moving in sync to the characters on screen and constantly anticipating his next sound. Often in *The Sentinels*, the foley script was so complicated that Ossama had to relate to multiple tracks in order to produce the necessary sounds to match the on-screen action.

Interestingly enough, foley is one of the least used resources of animation postproduction. And yet it is one of the most important elements in creating a total suspension of disbelief. Most animation only generates the barest foley track to complement the animation and voice track. When there is no dialogue, as is the case with the production of *The Sentinels*, the door is left open for the foley artist to pack his tracks with as much sound as possible. The final selection of which sounds and how loudly they will be featured on the final track is the responsibility of the final mixer and the director. It usually takes Ossama forty hours to correctly script and foley a feature length film as demanding as *The Sentinels*.

George Bours, the sound effects and music editor, wishes that it only took forty hours to create the sound effects for his phase of postproduction on *The Sentinels*. George has the nearly impossible task of creating sounds for vehicles, explosions, machinery, computer consoles, alien voice filters, radio filters, intercom filters, alien creatures, and the necessary (and often overlooked) element of audio presence for each room or environment.

Each vehicle has its own roster of sounds. Engine wind-ups and wind-downs, idles, sputters, gearboxes, and so forth. Weapons are also given individual "personalized" treatment. Most of the sounds used in *The Sentinels* are original sounds created on synthesizers or processed and manipulated from original recordings by the mixing division at Intersound. Most of these sounds have been transferred to a digital storage and playback unit known as an Emulator. Originally conceived as an electronic musical instrument capable of emulating any musical instrument from a "sample" recording of the musical scale, it has become a key element in the postproduction work done at Intersound.

The Emulators used at Intersound are either single or dual floppy disk dedicated computers with a series of function keys and slide bars connected to an electronic "piano-style" keyboard. Sounds are stored as "samples" on floppy disks. Any sample sound can be recorded up to a maximum of 17 seconds. Playback can be "looped" to allow the sound to recycle continuously. Sounds are then directed to various keys on the instrument. The sounds can be played in a manner similar to playing a piano. "C" equals a gunshot, "F" equals a tire squeal, "E" equals a waterfall, and so forth.

Once the sound has been entered into the Emulator it can be manipulated in up to ninety-nine variations. These variations relate to pitch, speed and direction. The sounds can be flopped, played in reverse, or any combination of the above.

Along with the Emulator, the sound effects artist also will use a series of specialized electronic filters, harmonizers, and graphic

equalizers. Not to mention standard tape cartridge units for less volatile sounds (such as running water, crowd sounds, and basic traffic).

The goal in this particular instance, is for George to take the foley tracks and augment them to create a totally real audio presence for the footage. George will often use as many as fifteen tracks to create the complicated sounds and room tones necessary to fill out the audio background for a scene.

One of the most significant differences in the work done at Intersound and other postproduction facilities is the use of audio presence or room tone to create a background ambience for the various locations in the production. More often than not, voices and other sounds heard in an animated film sound as though they were recorded inside a hollow, shapeless void. What this means is that the actual recording stage where the voices were recorded was perfect. It also means that the postproduction supervisors did not feel the need to augment the sound of the voices with appropriate room or environmental tones in order to place the voice of the actor into the scene. This hollowness is one of the main reasons that typical animation does not suspend disbelief. The simplest use of room tone or audio presence give the ear and the eye a common ground to relate to the program.

The technicians and recording engineers at Intersound have been taught to look for just the right room presence and introduce it into every scene. When a character is in a small cockpit the dialogue and sound effects sound as though they were coming from a small cockpit. When characters are in giant chambers, the sounds echo and resonate as though they come from a cavernous room. It is this attention to detail which gives the work of Intersound its unique audio-visual edge.

There is a certain advantage to the "state of the art" system used by Intersound. In traditional postproduction houses, the sound effects and music are all cut onto different tracks by hand. Little snippits of audio tape are placed on different machines, most often called "dubbers," with blank tape on either side of the sound effect. Sometimes entire reels are comprised of only one sound. This method wastes a lot of tape (general scrap material), and takes up a lot of space. Older, more established dubbing houses sometimes have forty or fifty dubbers. Each of these machines is the size of a narrow, upright refrigerator. Intersound is a relatively new facility. It has only been in operation since 1980. At the time of its inception, Ahmed Agrama, president of Intersound, chose to take a more "avant garde" approach to postproduction. His choice was to go with an all digital system which relied on an interlock system running simple time code synchronizers through an elaborate system of video tape and 8-track recording machines. This type of system was perfect for any delivery which would ultimately be made on videotape. The only limitations came when Intersound would be asked to prepare audio tracks for theatrical feature films. And then the only limitation was the number of dubbing machines available at the facility at any given time. If the film was complex, with many different tracks, then it meant more "real time" on the dubbers. The system employed by Intersound is a rough approximation of the type of system used in Lucasfilm's "Editdroid" complex. The basic difference between Editdroid and Intersound's system is the incidence of manual operation versus automated operation. But the results are essentially the same.

The advantage of a system like this is instant access to sounds and variations. It eliminates the time-consuming process of recording sounds on snippets of tape and then physically assembling them on tracks. The entire operation is done electronically on a Sony 24-track recorder linked to all of the high-tech equipment used by George Bours. The point to be made is simple. All things considered equal—time, sound effects library—Intersound would be able to create a more complete, more dense soundtrack with their system than a traditional house. The alteration and modification would also be easier and the results were immediately locked onto a master tape awaiting final remix.

Ardwight Chamberlain's job is one of the most difficult. His assignment is to take the script, written by myself, and modify the dialogue to fit the completed footage, directed by me. Bear in mind that the original animators did not have to animate to existing tracks. Therefore certain scenes might run long or short—as far as dialogue was concerned. The postproduction process in which the film was tailored to a more complete vision would help, but still it did not allow for the direct translation of the original script into spoken dialogue.

The process is extremely time consuming and tedious. There are very few writers who are able to do this type of work. Through the course of four years at Intersound, one of the premier locations for this type of work, only a handful of writers were able to work out the logistics of language to create believable scripts which captured the gist of the script while fitting the lip movement of the animated characters. Some of the best writers at this type of work are Greg Snegoff, Steve Kramer, Tom Weiner, Bob Barron, Winston Richards, and Ardwight Chamberlain.

Most of these writers honed their skills at writing for animation on either the original *Robotech* series or the less often seen *Captain Harlock and the Queen of a Thousand Years* epic produced by Harmony Gold in association with Toei Animation, Fuji-8, and Ziv International. The attention to detail and the complexity of the scripts forced writers to apply themselves more to these projects than to regular ADR scripts for live action films. During off periods at Intersound many of these writers would work on prestige projects such as translations of Ingmar Bergman films or other animated projects.

The best ADR writers are also actors. They have to be able to "read the lips" of a character and interpret a script so that the words that are put into the character's mouth are both appropriate and interesting. When they succeed, the results are flawless—it appears as though the animation was done to the finished voice track. The goal is to get seventy to eighty percent sync for dialogue. Much of this is accomplished by writing dialogue which goes over cuts or continues when the character's mouth is not seen.

Each line of dialogue is given an appropriate and accurate time code reference. The more complete and accurate the code and dialogue, in terms of syllable count and use of fricatives and plosives, the closer the dialogue will be to the mouth movement. The entire concept makes the dialogue found in the *Robotech* and *Captain Harlock* series all the more remarkable for it's clarity and insight.

Ardwight Chamberlain is one of the finest ADR writers working in Los Angeles. His career is quite varied. An accomplished playwright, screenplay writer and adaptor, Ardwight has worked on an amazingly diverse group of projects. His English language

script for *Das Boot* was every bit as good as the original German language version. It was amazing to watch Ardwight swing back and forth from the sublime work of his theatrical adaptations to the pulp fiction of *Robotech*. Ardwight also wrote the dialogue for *Robotech The Movie: The Untold Story*.

It generally takes two to three weeks to work through the problems of adapting the original script into a workable ADR script. During that time, the producer and director would audition actors. Taking small sections of the completed script, actors from Intersound's large talent pool would be brought in for voice audition. The procedure is similar to that which takes place in traditional animation projects. Only this time the producer and director are able to see the character as it will appear on screen with any number of different voices. If everything goes as planned, by the time the script is prepared, the cast is selected.

It now becomes the job of Andrea Coppola to organize the entire production around the availability of actors and studio recording times. It is a high-pressure job that requires constant communication between directors, actors, and producers. The goal is to get actors through the studio at an average rate of fifteen loops per hour. A typical features has 1,000 loops, which works itself out to approximately sixty-five hours of studio time. This does not take into account retakes, scrubbed tracks, walla groups, and any unforeseen circumstances. It is safe to allow two weeks to record a feature-length project.

During the month that it takes for the writing and recording of the dialogue George Bours and his staff prepare the sound effects and music for the final mixing stage.

If George has got a jump on things he is able to provide a complete track, prior to the beginning of the recording session. In this way, the actors are able to respond to explosions and various source-generated sounds. This gives more believability to the acting. But things do not always work out this way.

The production is done when the final approved dialogue, sound effects and music are combined in the appropriately named "final mix." In this phase the subtle arrangement of sounds creates the magic of the film. Just how loud to play the music or effect. Will the voice be affected by a filter. How much perspective (or spacial distance) will the voice or effect be given to add realism to the mix. All things considered, the process is quite involved for something that most people will regard as "only a cartoon."

6

MUSIC

Music plays an important factor in the production of most films. It is a means by which mood and tone can be set in a nonverbal, nonvisual way. Music can provide a counterpoint to action (a favorite technique of Japanese film-makers). Music can whisk the action along with exciting, pulse-pounding rhythm. There have been many books and essays devoted to the significance of a particular composer or the importance of a dynamic score to a specific film.

When we first began thinking about *The Sentinels* the project was scheduled to be a sixty-five episode sequel to *Robotech*. We had already built up a library of nearly four hours of original music for the first series. But realizing that the settings and the characters in *The Sentinels* were quite different, it was determined that a new series of themes and cues would be developed.

Thomas A. White, then president of Harmony Gold Music, began the search for composers to create the library of themes and cues needed for the production.

This was in the late fall of 1985, before any animation had been generated by Tatsunoko. The idea was to give the chosen composer a drawing and description of a specific character and suggest the mood and tone of the music needed to produce a *leit motif* and let the composer's imagination run wild. We were looking for a minimum of thirty new cues. Those thirty cues would be broken down into six major themes with five variations each. If the composer got on a roll and produced more music—then so much the better.

The selection of a composer of this project was difficult. We were looking for music that was both epic in scope and yet contemporary. We wanted to move away from the "Star Wars" style of *Robotech* while maintaining a sense of the heroic necessary to build an emotional link to the action. After listening to many different "audition tapes" from a number of composers, we finally settled on Steve Witmack and Michael Bradley.

Witmack and Bradley were no strangers to *Robotech*. In fact, it had been Witmack and Bradley who had written the high-energy songs sung by Yellow Dancer in the Third Generation section of the first series as well as the theme for "The Flower of Life." They had never been called upon to score an entire series and looked forward to the challenge.

The process of describing the exact theme or tone for a particular character or environment is extremely difficult. Oftentimes the use of metaphors and poetic examples only serve to confuse the issue. At first we kept trying to suggest that *The Sentinels* was something like "The Magnificent Seven" in outer space. The first tunes we got back were reminiscent of Dimitri Tiomkin and Elmer Bernstein. Not bad. But not exactly what we were looking for.

But merely saying that a theme should be "heroic" or "exciting" is not enough. Everyone has a different perception of heroism and excitement. What was needed was someone who understood the essence of *The Sentinels* and would be able to translate that into musical terms. At this phase, that someone had to be Thomas A. White.

White would spend countless hours with the composers trying to get them to visualize alien worlds and exotic characters. White would meet with Ahmed Agrama, Frank Agrama, and myself to determine the exact nature of the music needed. At times it seemed that the process was going nowhere. But everyone was patient.

The first time we heard any music it was generally played on a piano or a synthesizer. All we heard was the basic theme. It was a raw approximation of the final product without the fullness of orchestration and arrangement. If something hit a nerve or had the right feel to it we gave Witmack and Bradley the go-ahead.

The key to creating music is the arrangement. All factors equal, competent musicians in place, proper arrangement will transform an average theme into a wonderfully expressive piece of music. Witmack and Bradley were master arrangers.

The music they came up with was inspired. It was a fusion of jazz, rock, classical, and new-wave (titles like "Herbie Hancock Rides the Magic Bus" should give some indication as to the type of sounds Witmack and Bradley were striving for).

What was interesting in regard to this particular body of music was the fact that Thomas A. White felt the score should be created electronically. He wanted the sound to appear futuristic and "alien." He was trying to get away from the acoustic sounds of real instruments used in *Robotech*. The score for *The Sentinels*

would be an experiment in music composed via synthesizer.

The process of layering synthesized music together to create a score is remarkable. The "orchestration" is done instrument by instrument and recorded digitally on an individual track of a 24-track recording machine. Each element is adjusted and "individualized" for maximum musical content. The entire process is extremely time consuming and it is hard for a person not familiar with the total score to understand the layering until the piece is completed. Many themes and phrases serve as undercoatings. They form a base of music which the real themes and musical detail will glide over. The entire process is like watching a painting take shape with your ear.

One restriction upon the composers was the necessity of writing music which was modular. The concept was to create a musical library which could be used for an entire series. In this way themes had to be able to be altered, shortened, lengthened, and rearranged at will by the music editor. This is quite different from the process of scoring music to picture. The reason for this particular modular approach was simple—at the time that the music was commissioned there was no animation to compose to. And if we had to wait until all sixty-five episodes were complete to allow the score to be written to picture then the music budget would become unapproachable.

This concept of modularity was also used in *Robotech.* It was the only way four hours of music could be used to score nearly thirty-three hours of programming. The actual music may have been conceived differently, but the basic approach to usage was the same. The main difference between the way the music for *Robotech* and the *The Sentinels* was recorded was simply the fact that *Robotech* was done in mono and *The Sentinels* was done in stereo.

The only reason *Robotech* was not done in stereo was that the option was not considered at the time of production. Since that time, stereo broadcast and video cassette players capable of stereo reproduction have become firmly entrenched in the mainstream electronic environment. It was only logical, considering the state of the art position taken on *The Sentinels*, that the music generated for the production should be done in stereo.

This also meant that the sound effects and the dialogue would be given a stereo reprocessing. This would account for the "panning" found in certain sound effects as mecha zoomed from one side of the screen to the other. It would add an overall sense of realism to the production. The entire audio track—dialogue, effects, and music—would benefit from the naturalness which stereo gives to recorded sound.

When the music was composed, the concept of theme and variation was extremely important to set the mood of the specific cue. The criteria was basic. The options for the variations were: action, tension, heroic, humorous, and contemporary. From these simple guidelines Witmack and Bradley were able to turn out a wonderfully complex musical score. Themes for the Regent and the aged scientist Cabell were outstanding. *The Sentinels'* theme had the heroic character of the original *Robotech* material with a more contemporary feel. Interestingly enough, as things worked out, much of Witmack and Bradley's music ended up in the score to *Robotech, the Movie: The Untold Story*.

Once everyone was satisfied with the music, master copies were turned over to George Bours. He would transfer them to work reels which would be used to compose the music track for

the final mix.

George would go through the cues and mark down characteristic descriptions. He would then watch the film several times and spot cues. At this point the suggestions were played for Ahmed Agrama and myself. We would make suggestions or indicate that a certain cue may be inappropriate for a particular scene. But by and large, George would create an excellent musical backbone for the film on the first try.

The next phase was the actual music editing. George would get into the mechanics of the music. He would listen to find the right spot in which a cue could be cut and then either lengthened or shortened. He did the job by ear. It seemed at times that George had a certain "zen" feeling for editing music. His work was amazing in its complexity. What was even more amazing was the speed at which George would edit the music. Eventually the job would be augmented with the help of an Apple Macintosh computer with a waveform analyzer which was able to determine graphically the exact location of "dead spots."

These spots were perfect areas for cut and paste applications.

An interesting problem arose during the construction of the soundtrack for *The Sentinels*. How to keep the digital sound effects and voice processing from interfering with the completely synthesized music score? It is a theoretical problem that manifested itself in many different ways. Sometimes an effect was too loud and would electronically clash with the synthesized music. Sometimes the combination of electronically produced sounds would cancel each other out. Sometimes the Dolby® noise reduction would play a role in the phasing of the track.

The goal was to make the soundtrack as dense as possible. It was to make the final product seem real. The wrong mix could throw the entire film off. We all had that experience when the first mix of the first version of *Robotech, the Movie* was delivered to Cannon Films. The dialogue was mixed in disproportion to the music and effects—the result was an ineffective film. It resulted in Harmony Gold producing an entirely new version of the film.

There are different criteria in television syndication—especially since Harmony Gold was handling the distribution and sales of *The Sentinels* through its own syndication department. Still, no one wanted to go through the experience of redoing the work due to a "problem in the mix."

With this in mind, George completed his assignment on the first episode and everyone waited for a reaction.

The reaction would never come. The production of *The Sentinels* was halted. The flow of animation from Japan stopped. The sale of the series, which was already licensed to over sixty percent of the country, was put on hold. It was a difficult period for everyone involved. The question on everybody's mind was: Why?

7

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Up to this point, the entire experience of writing, producing, and directing *The Sentinels* was a dream come true. It was a venture which would link Japanese animation technique with American storytelling in an alliance which eliminated the client/employee relationship which has held back so much of today's current animation. It was an ideal situation—animation utopia. It had to be too good to last. When and why the bubble burst is such a complicated matter that it seems more like fiction than real life.

Everything seemed to be sailing along up to Toy Fair 1986. An entire roster of dialogue scripts had been commissioned based on original stories written by myself following my return from Japan. Animation was trickling into the country. The sound effects had been created, voice actors

cast, music composed.

The 1986 NATPE (National Association of Television Program Executives) convention resulted in an initial sell in for *The Sentinels* which placed it in over sixty percent of the country.

The entire merchandising program for *Robotech* was in full swing. *The Sentinels* would be the logical move to extend the product life of the license and keep everything moving.

There was even talk about a third season of animation. It was to be called *Robotech: The Odyssey*. The story would focus on the efforts to find Rick Hunter and company, and return the SDF-3 to Earth.

And then the bottom fell out of everything.

One of the first factors which led to the problem was the devaluation of the U.S. dollar versus the Japanese Yen. At the time that the original production was originated and the budgets formed between Harmony Gold and Matchbox, the dollar was worth approximately 220 Yen. By the time the deal was finalized with Tatsunoko, the dollar was worth 160 Yen and slipping. The production was to be paid in Yen. And so the original production budget lost twenty-five percent of its value before production began.

At first everyone thought this was not an insurmountable problem. But as the dollar continued to slip against the Yen what was once conceived as a budget allowing the production of sixty-five episodes of original animation soon became a budget that would only accommodate, at the most, thirty-six episodes.

1986 was also the year that television syndication would be bombarded with a glut of original animation for syndication. When *Robotech* first hit the scene, there were only a few competitors. By the fall of 1986, *The Sentinels* would merely be one of a number of animated programs which could easily be lost in the shuffle. Fall of 1985 saw the introduction of animated series such as *G.I. Joe, Transformers, Thundercats, She-Ra: Princess of Power, Go-Bots, Rambo, Chuck Norris*, as well as many other smaller series which aired on Saturday or Sunday morning. Most of these series were sold to stations on a multiyear basis. Some even linked stations with profit participation from the sale of toys. It is hard to bump a show when a percentage of station revenues are directly linked to toy sales derived from that particular product.

The competition to position new programming on the best station in a particular area was fierce. All sorts of innovative techniques had been devised to get television stations to choose one program in favor of the rest. Advertising dollars played a key role in the process.

A company like Matchbox hoped to compete in the action figure market, a market dominated by Hasbro and Mattel. Much of the production of *The Sentinels* would be underwritten by Matchbox from funds justified as part of their advertising "budget." It's actually much more complicated than this. Matchbox would also have to advertise on the stations that picked up *Robotech* and *The Sentinels* (sold as a 130-episode powerhouse series). But in an environment where money talks and good intention walks, it was hard for Matchbox to compete with Hasbro and Mattel.

Matchbox's net yearly earnings were approximately $150 million. Hasbro and Mattel were in the $800 million to $1.2 billion dollar range. A typical corporate budget for a company like Matchbox or Mattel would allow for fifteen percent of their total earnings to be devoted to advertising. It is a formula which has been standard (plus or minus a few points) for many years. It is easy to see that Matchbox's total yearly earnings

were roughly equal to the amount of money that a company like Hasbro or Mattel would spend on advertising alone. It made it hard to compete.

A lot of money would be riding on the success of a toy line. And in 1986 one of the key factors in the promotion and marketing of toys was advertiser-supported television programmed striped daily during afternoon children's prime-time on a network of quality syndication outlets. A product line like *Transformers* alone might be worth $200 million.

The Sentinels fell into the trap of trying to compete on this level. There was no real support to keep the series on a level with *Transformers, G.I. Joe*, or even *She-Ra*.

If the introduction of the *Robotech* toy line was a blowout at the 1986 Toy Fair, it might justify the commitment. All of the other toys which would have a series on the air in 1986 had already been introduced in 1985 or before. In 1986 there was no standout line. Everything seemed to be at a point of stagnation. The *Robotech* toy line was a hybrid. It was from a company which had, until recently, been associated with die-cast miniatures. It wasn't a solid transforming line like *Go-Bots* or *Transformers*. It wasn't a fully realized action figure line like *He-Man* or *G.I. Joe*. The initial sell through for the *Robotech* line was less than one-third of that anticipated by Matchbox.

This certainly contributed to the fate of *The Sentinels*. At this point a red flag should have gone up. Discussions which suggested that Robotech was too complicated began to surface. The ratings, which had been holding steady for a year without the benefit of advertiser support, were suspect. The relative ratings success and station placement of *Transformers*, *Thundercats*, and *G.I. Joe* began to make the point to Matchbox.

Add to this a number of factors which contributed to late delivery of the *Robotech* product line into toy stores, and the fate of *The Sentinels* seemed doomed.

Trapped in the glut with nowhere to go, *The Sentinels* would have to ride out the problem or fail. Negotiations continued with Matchbox to keep with the production. It was the one clear-cut way to insure that their product line would get proper exposure throughout 1986. Matchbox was unclear as to which way to go. Continue to coproduce *The Sentinels* and ride out the storm, or let the project fall through cracks, chalking it all up to experience. Unfortunately, by the time a decision was made it was too late to continue the production.

The situation was as follows: One episode of *The Sentinels* had been completed. Animation for approximately three more episodes had been completed. The first dozen or so episodes had been storyboarded. Design work for most of the entire series had been done. All sixty-five episodes had been written. An entire music library was written and recorded and a new one-inch videotape system had been installed at Intersound.

There is little that can be done with one episode of anything. Ahmed Agrama and I were not willing to let *The Sentinels* sit on the shelf. Frank Agrama needed to hear some good news. Everyone seemed caught in the middle of a set of circumstances which were beyond control. Fortunately there was an out. The plotting of *The Sentinels* was serialized—much in the same way as *Robotech*. The story continued from episode to episode.

Upon scrutiny of the footage which had been completed, it was determined that a "feature length" story could be built out of the material. It would require radical editing from the original material due to the fact that most of the action occurred in the first epi-

sode. It was more important to save the major action "set piece" of the animation for the finale of the film.

It became an exercise in postproduction. The footage was taken out of sequence and re-edited into a feature-length program. The script had to be totally rewritten to match the new plot points.

If Harmony Gold did not feel strongly about the project, *The Sentinels* would never have left the cutting room. Frank Agrama backed the project whole-heartedly. It would be his gift to the thousands of *Robotech* fans who had surfaced over the years. There was a bright side to the story: A feature-length special was better than nothing. But at what cost!

It started out as a salvaging job. But as the process of building this new story took shape, it became clear that *The Sentinels* was a way to finish off a part of the *Robotech* story which cried out for a resolution. It was a complex plot which shifted from Earth to Tyrol (a moon of Fantoma—and the homeworld of the Robotech Masters). It showed three civilizations moving toward the same inevitable end, each motivated by different needs. The convoluted structure and the epic scope of the images elevated the film from typical kidvid.

It was "talky" in parts. Some of the animation was weak (no provision for retakes), and sometimes the syntax of the film was faulty (due to the reconstruction effort necessary to turn the material into a feature-length project). Still there was a raw power in the footage. There was something about seeing Rick Hunter and the gang, ten years older, moving through a series of difficult decisions. The introduction of new characters, the potential for romance, the grandeur of the Invid's exotic biomechanical technology, the new creatures and mecha. . . . It was a logical extension of *Robotech.*

Jack McKinney, author of the paperback novels chronicling the *Robotech* saga, said it best. "It feels right. I wasn't sure you could pull it off but it's just as good as the original. In some ways even better."

But what could you do with a single 90-minute special? It would be hard to syndicate.

The solution was to create a new package of feature-length animation from existing films (similar to the way *Robotech* was produced) to go along with *The Sentinels* and offer them as a syndication package for 1987 and 1988. Following this route, these new films would then be offered for home video.

The package that was finally agreed upon was called "Animation Adventure Theatre." It consisted of *The World of the Talisman* (a.k.a. *Birth*), *Once Upon a Time, A Chronicle of Windaria* (a.k.a. *Windaria*) and *The Sentinels.*

For the die-hard *Robotech* fan, the original stories which would have been animated as *The Sentinels* have been optioned by Ballantine and will be appearing as a series of novels which will extend the *Robotech* universe.

Jack McKinney worked from the original plot points developed for *The Sentinels* and characters and situations developed in the original series of twelve novels.

At this point, it is doubtful that any more *Robotech* footage will be produced. But the story will live on in books and miscellaneous items merchandised by Harmony Gold and its various licensees.

Thousands of fans have written to Harmony Gold, Comico, and Ballantine asking about *The Sentinels.* Television stations have received, literally, a mountain of letters requesting that *Robotech* be put back on the air. Unfortunately, it is not that simple.

John Rocknowski, President of

Harmony Gold Marketing, has a suspicion that *Robotech* will be recycled for a new generation in a few years. His thinking is based upon the fact that *Robotech* was introduced originally without a toy line and eventually, a new generation of viewers will be able to thrill to the excitement and adventure found in this groundbreaking series.

The experience with *Robotech* was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Everything seemed to fall into place. When *The Sentinels* was first conceptualized, it seemed that finally something interesting would be given to animation fans, both young and old. But the harsh realities of television syndication and the toy industry hold great influence over what is shown on television and on home video.

So many fans want to see their favorite Japanese film translated into English and broadcast on their local station. They want everyone to experience the excitement and joy they feel when watching films like *Vampire Hunter D* or *Project A-KO*. They are unable to put things into perspective. Often the wrong factors are blamed for the poor translation of what little Japanese animation does make it to American television or into the home video market.

Most people in the industry were soured to Japanese animation following the introduction of *Battle of the Planets*. It was touted as a major series which would revolutionize the way people viewed animation for television. And the experiment failed. It did not live up to expectations—even though it was adapted from one of the finest animation series produced in Japan at the time. The translations were far below the original storyline set out in the Japanese series. The violence was gutted from the footage and replaced with an unsuccessful linking device. The merchandising never really took off. Some fans have accused the project of having a take-the-money-and-run feel about it.

The sad thing about most television program executives is that they have poor memories. Mention Japanese animation and shields go up. Regardless of the fact that ninety percent of all animation produced for television syndication comes from either Japan, Taiwan, or Korea.

Several new producers have tried to get into the television syndication game with recycled projects like *Tranzor Z, Tekkaman, Macron I,* and *Sabre Rider*. The feeling which inspires their confidence comes from their belief that if two companies (Harmony Gold and World Events) could do it, then anyone can do it. *Sabre Rider* is the new project from the part of the development group responsible for *Voltron*. It is not that easy.

Voltron slipped through because it had no competition. Its early ratings success inspired a relatively successful product line. *Robotech* was a calculated move on the part of Harmony Gold—it was designed as a merchandising tool. That it turned out to be the type of show it is derives from the fact that superior animation and clever storytelling were able to transcend the stigma of "foreign" animation. Also there were far fewer shows to compete with when *Robotech* first hit the airwaves.

From this point out, very few programs will be able to make the leap across the Pacific Ocean. There will be occasional stuff like *Maple Town Story* which will surface from time to time, but this will almost always be linked to a toy line. *Maple Town* originated in Japan as a toy line and an animated series.

The last hope for serious fans of animation rests in the home video market. This market has become extremely important in Japan. And with the interest of

companies like Books Nippon it may become an important part of the video scene in the United States.

Several of the recent projects started by Harmony Gold are focused on the area of home video. The goal is to link up with Japanese studios and attempt, once again, to generate original material for home video and television syndication which has merchandising potential for both the Japanese and American market. Not an easy thing to do.

If there was a mistake made in the concept of *Robotech* and *The Sentinels* it would have to be in the faith of good programming to transcend the rules of the marketplace. The entire situation was a noble experiment which, however entertaining and provocative, was not meant to survive. The classic case in point is the situation surrounding the development and production of *Robotech, the Movie: The Untold Story*.

8

ROBOTECH THE MOVIE

In the summer of 1985, at the height of *Robotech's* popularity, a local Los Angeles television newscaster, Sam Chu Lin, did a feature on Harmony Gold which talked about the possibility of producing *Robotech, the Movie.* Harmony Gold was compared to Walt Disney Studios (which was readying *The Black Cauldron* for release at the time). One of the principal owners of Cannon Films was acquainted with Frank Agrama. When he saw him on television talking about the *Robotech* phenomenon, things began to fall into place. The next day Frank Agrama got a call from Stan Blum, representing Cannon Films. It seems that Cannon wanted to work with Harmony Gold to put out *Robotech, The Movie.*

The actual deal was more complicated, but the gist of the

story is as simple as that.

Cannon had a few criteria that had to be dealt with. One of the most significant was the fact that they did not want the theatrical feature to rehash what kids could see on television for free. The point was, if someone dished out five dollars to see *Robotech, The Movie,* it better be for something they'd never seen before.

The other criteria was a specific release date. After negotiation it was determined that the summer of 1986 would be the optimum time for a release. Several dates were tossed about before the agreement of the summer '86 release. At first Christmas 1985 seemed like a possibility.

But if Harmony Gold were going to produce new animation then a revised schedule had to be agreed upon.

The majority of the animation seen in *Robotech, The Movie* was produced by The Idol Co. I wrote the original story. Footage was storyboarded initially by Australian artist Paul Power. Once the gist of the scenes were understood, the Japanese would restoryboard the scenes to match their existing style of animation.

Additional animation for *Robotech, The Movie* was completed by April of 1986.

The postproduction was handled in the same way as *The Sentinels;* actors were brought in to ADR sessions. Once the dialogue and sound effects were in place and the music was selected, the film was taken to the mixing stage at Disney's Buena Vista facility. Working with a group of union mixers who had most recently won an Oscar for *Out of Africa*, the mixing of the movie was completed in record time—even though the tracks were composed in 6-track Dolby© "Sensaround."

The story is typically complex (following in the tradition of the original *Robotech* series). The action scenes are powerful and the relationship between characters is strong. Characters die, revelations are learned about the true nature of the Robotech Masters. All in all it is an interesting science fiction film.

Unfortunately, nothing seemed to go right with the marketing of this film. For one thing the film's booking agents did not bother to read any of the information provided regarding the film (or even check its PG-13 rating). It was booked in over 700 theaters as a matinee film. An initial test run in a dozen Texas cities would determine the viability of the project.

However, in the markets that were selected, the theaters scheduled to show the film were not provided with a theatrical trailer (preview of coming attractions). Movie posters were not printed until a few weeks before the screening of the film. It was scheduled to come out one week after *Aliens* was released.

Harmony Gold sent Gabriel Riera, Richard Firth, Randi Titlebaum, and myself to Texas, three weeks prior to the release of the film, to spearhead a grassroots promotional campaign to increase public awareness of the film.

The effort paid off in the early release of the film. Fandom knew about the release. They supported the film. But nobody else knew what was happening. Adults would show up for evening screenings only to find *Robotech, The Movie* replaced with either *Vamp* or *Back to School*. Cannon only advertised the film for three days. And still the film played in the Dallas/Fort Worth area for nearly a month. Word of mouth played an important factor.

And although it outgrossed *Pirates*, Cannon's "prestige" release during that period, in most of the targeted test area, *Robotech, The Movie* was considered a bust. It was reviewed favorably, being awarded the distinction of "family film of the week" by a local

Fort Worth newspaper.

Promotional tie-ins with Matchbox and The Donning Co. in numerous locations in and around the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex managed to move a lot of toys and art books. But momentum never got behind the release of the film.

Demographics indicated that the film was not geared for children. The ad dollars spent on promoting *Robotech, The Movie* at 6:30 a.m. on Scooby Doo were not effective. The ratio of adults (over thirteen) to children at the box office was near seven to one.

In some mall venues, Richard Firth actually watched mothers running from the theatre carrying their screaming preschool children away as fast as they could. Apparently the film was too intense for these youngsters. The entire scene caused a bit of controversy.

In Dallas they have a dual rating system for all films. The MMPA rating (G, PG, R, X) and a local rating system (suitable, suitable with exception, and unsuitable). Initially, since *Robotech, The Movie* was "only a cartoon" it was given a suitable-for-all-ages classification. Following all the ruckus, the rating was changed to read suitable with exception for violence.

Many local specialty retail shops (Lone Star Comics and Fantastic Worlds) went out of their way to promote the film to their customers. Contests were held, gifts and movie posters were given away. No stone was left unturned. And still, only the fans got to see the film.

Domestically the release of *Robotech, The Movie* was stalled. International release was a different story. Reports indicate that the film has played and been received well in countries as diverse as Chile and Argentina.

The film became part of Cannon's canon. It was in their catalogue. Any independent theater could book the film if it so desired. In fact, the film did have exposure in various cities when industrious theater owners plagued by requests from local fans inquired to Cannon and were sent a print.

Recently, *Robotech, The Movie* was screened as part of the Second Animation Celebration, a week-long event held in Los Angeles. It drew one of the largest crowds of the event.

It may see the light of day as a home video release. But the process of trying to make something fit into a vision that was not consistent with the spirit of *Robotech* is quite disquieting. It isn't long before honest intentions are altered into something less than the original. At that point it is fruitless to carry the project to its conclusion. Perhaps it is better that *Robotech, The Movie* did not get a broader release.

The commercial aspects of projects are not in question. Rather it is the belief, not shared by most who worked on the project, that the audience for animation is willing to swallow anything.

It has always been my belief that there is an audience for animated films. Not an audience comprised of children, but an intelligent audience which is able to suspend disbelief and find entertainment in the graphics, color, action, and storytelling that good animation can offer.

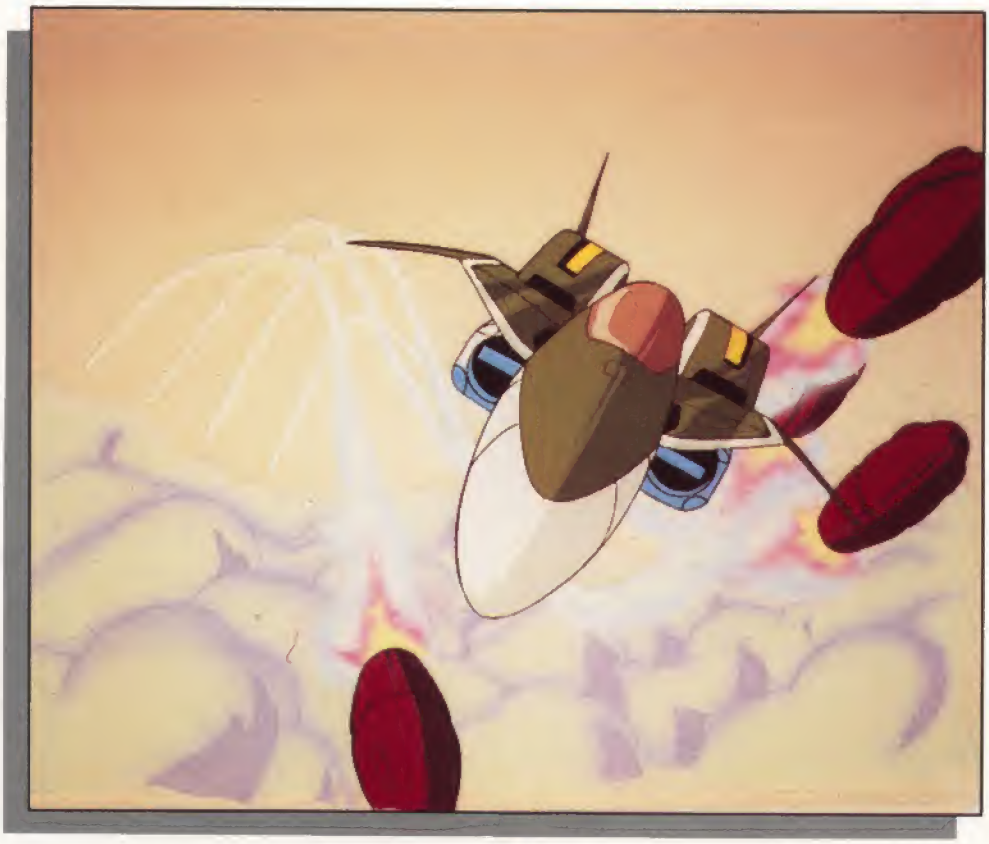
Most of the world shares this viewpoint. The one place where this idea is considered idiotic is in the United States. A survey of the recent releases of animated feature films will tell the tale. Where are the films of artists such as Miyazaki, Tezuka, and the visionaries who work out of Hungary's Pannonia Studios. They are entertaining millions of people around the world and constantly reinforcing the fact that animation is not just for kids.

What is the solution?

The first thing that must be

done is re-educate the general public to the true nature of animation. Sure, it's fun to watch *Betty Boop* and *Felix the Cat*, but animation goes beyond camp, it is the ultimate form of filmmaking.

Perhaps films like Spielberg's *Who Killed Roger Rabbit*? (innovatively combining live action—directed by Robert *(Back to the Future)* Zemeckis—and animation—directed by Richard Williams) will set a new standard for animation that can be enjoyed by children and adults alike.



Ralph Bakshi's tenure as animation's "bad boy"—the guy who broke all the rules—is over. His new production of *The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse* is hip and slick, but it is a far cry from the groundbreaking work of such masterpieces as *Coonskin* and *American Pop*. Bakshi did more than anyone to try and give adults animation that could be enjoyed on an artistic level.

The best that can be hoped for is that a new generation of animators will take a lesson from Bakshi, Martin Rosen (*Watership Down* and *Plague Dogs*), and Richard Williams and make animated films which stand on their own. The day that an animated film which is not a Disney film (or a Disney clone) makes a significant mark at the box office, the floodgates will be opened for the work of genius exemplified by Miyasaki to reach into Western minds.

It could never have happened with *Robotech*. The concept is too deeply rooted in pulp science fiction. But the simple fact that the demographics for *Robotech* indicated an audience, which was not typical of kidvid statistics, shows that the right project will be welcomed with open arms. *The Sentinels* could have been that breakthrough. A team of innovative science fiction authors, presenting interesting and challenging concepts; a larger-than-life canvas used to tell an epic story of oppression and obsession; genuine emotion translated into archetypal relationships.

Now we'll never know. It was an interesting experiment which points out the basic weakness of the system; Never make an audience reach for anything in animation. If an idea can't be expressed as a "high concept" then it has no business in the mainstream of the motion picture industry. Leave the intelligent stuff for filmmakers like John Sayles and Richard Attenborough. I'm not quite sure that's the way to go.

PART TWO

THE SERIES

WEEK ONE

EPISODE 1

A NEW THREAT

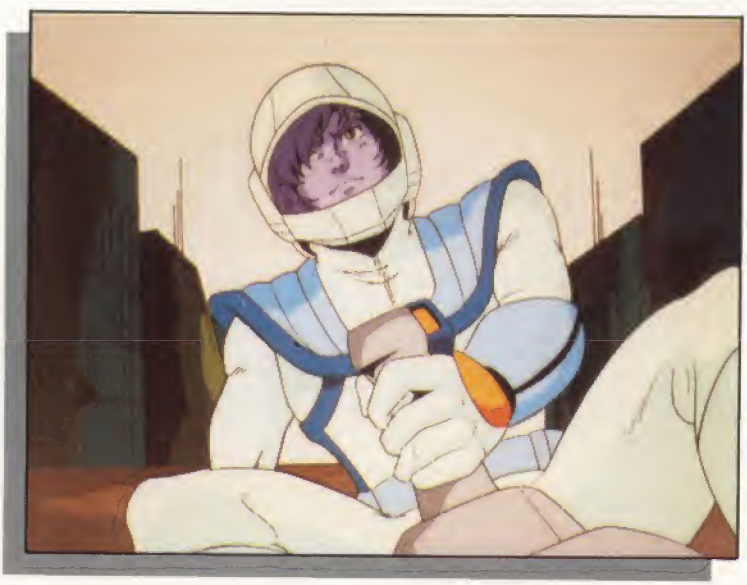
timeframe: 2022
locations: Earth Robotech Factory moon of Fantoma
major characters: Rick Hunter, Lisa Hayes, Max Sterling, Miriya Sterling, Dana Sterling, Vince Grant, Jean Grant, Bowie Grant, Dr. Lang, B. D. Edwards, Karen Penn, Jack Baker, Minmei, Janice, Cabell, Rem, Regent, Breetai, Exedore.
minor characters: Rolf Emerson, General Leonard, Dr. Penn, misc. fighter pilots, misc. citizens of Fantoma, misc. Invid, misc. Bioroid fighters.

1. Camera pans through the cosmos to the planet Earth.

2. Rick Hunter and company enter a space shuttle and prepare

Lisa, Rick, and crew meet micronized Breetai.

Cabell.



Jack Baker.

for a trip into space to rendezvous with Robotech Factory to check on progress of construction of SDF-3 and to stage wedding on board the ship prior to the launch of the Robotech Expeditionary Force.

3. During the journey to the Robotech Factory, Dr. Lang is told that he will be in charge of the Robotech Expeditionary Force. They talk about the need to present a diplomatic solution to the problem instead of a military solution—if at all possible. Exedore talks about his feelings concerning the Robotech Masters—his hope is that they will be able to listen to reason.

4. Most of the women have arranged a meeting to discuss the details of Lisa's impending wedding with Rick.

5. The arrival at the Robotech Factory.

6. The introduction of Jack as a Cadet studying at the Robotech Factory. He is impressed at seeing such an important group getting off the shuttle.

7. The group inspects the construction of the SDF-3 and comments on the fact that it is important to perform the hyper-space warp from space—they comment on what happened the last time when the SDF-1 ripped a small island from the surface of the earth during the fold operation.

8. The introduction of the Micronized Breetai!

9. The star chart as Exedore tells of the location of the homeworld of the Robotech Masters. The cast speculates as to what they will expect on the homeworld of the Robotech Masters.

10. Visual segue to the Homeworld of the Robotech Masters. The locale is similar in architecture to that of the cities inside the ships of the "Robotech Masters" (Zuro ships in the Southern Cross Series). There are very few signs of life in the streets. The camera shows that the people on the planet seem bored and uninter-

Invid shock troopers.

Jack Baker and Rick Hunter
in battle simulator.

Max Sterling and Rick Hunter.

Rick Hunter, Max Sterling,
and Dr. Lang.

Max Sterling and Rick Hunter.

ested in life.

11. The only activity on the planet comes from the laboratory of Cabell and his young assistant, Rem. Cabell is a scientist who was left behind by the Robotech Masters because he was sure that he was on the verge of discovering the secret to protoculture—this is the subject of the conversation between Rem and Cabell.

12. The defense system of the Robotech Masters' army of Bioroid Invid Fighters is activated.

13. The Invid attack the moon of Fantoma—Cabell and Rem run to safety taking with the small animals known as "Cha Cha"—animals which Cabell thinks hold the secret to protoculture—many of the Robotech Masters have nicknamed these creatures "The children of Zor." Rem does not understand why Cabell does not stop to fight the Invid. Cabell tells him that there is much at stake and does not wish to have the Invid learn of his experiments.

14. The Invid attack is quite brutal. They destroy the defenses of the Robotech Masters (much in the same way as the Invid destroyed the Earth in the First Episode of Mospeada).

15. The Invid Regent is introduced as he surveys his Invid Horde's latest conquest. The Regent requests a complete search for protoculture and any blossoming plants of the mysterious Flower of Life.

16. Cabell and Rem watch the conquest of their planet from the safety of a hidden chamber in his laboratory. They feel as though they are doomed.

EPISODE 2

THE INORGANICS

timeframe: 2022
locations: "Robotech Factory" moon of Fantoma
Major characters: as in previous episode
Introduction of New Characters: The Inorganics
Minor Characters: as in previous episode

1. On board the Robotech Factory, Rick takes a few minutes from his schedule to view a training session of the Robotech Defense Forces. He notices one student—Jack Baker. He is impressed by his skill. Following the training exercise, Rick talks to Jack. Jack is flattered to be approached by the famous hero of the First Robotech War. He has little to say however, preferring to be excused to continue his studies. Rick perceives this as strange behavior but puts it out of his mind as he is met by Max Sterling and the conversation turns toward his upcoming marriage.

2. Lisa is trying on her wedding gown. She is talking to Jean Grant and Miriya Sterling. Dana and Bowie are playing in the background.

3. Minmei and Janice come to

wish the bride good luck and ask her to select a song for them to sing at her wedding.

4. Dr. Lang and Exedore are trying to head a planning session for the Formation of the Robotech Expeditionary Force. They listen to various arguments about the use of a first strike against the Robotech Masters.

5. Back on the moon of Fantoma, the Invid Enforcers are assembling the survivors of the Invid attack on the forces of the Robotech Masters. The prisoners of war are not very impressive. They are either quite young adolescents or aged and weak people. There are not strong brave warriors. It is a point which confuses the Invid Regent. He is trying to make sense of the whereabouts of the Robotech Masters and their alleged Protoculture Factory (the legendary SDF-1 from the original *Robotech* series). It is too much of a puzzle for the Regent to unravel at this time.

6. A report of the presence of protoculture from some distant planet causes the Regent to call for his Invid horde to prepare to leave. Before he goes he brings out his Occupation Army—a division of lifeless machines—The Inorganics—programmed by the Regent to act as a police force on the moon until he returns to exploit his conquered planet.

7. Cabell and Rem are still hidden in the secret chamber and are watching the progress of the Invid and the introduction of the Inorganics. One element of the Inorganic force are "Cougars"—mechanical animals which are deployed to "sniff" out any hidden pockets of protoculture or citizens which have avoided capture up to this point.

8. The Invid leave the moon of Fantoma in the control of the Inorganics. They are all controlled by a central living organism (a huge pink "brain" as seen in Mospeada Episode #12—a plot point which will connect the two series in a subtle way). They also leave a small detachment of Invid to patrol the surrounding area in case the Robotech Masters return unexpectedly.

9. Rem and Cabell realize that they must do something fast if they are to remain free.

Robotech factory.

Minmei visits Lisa before the wedding.

Cabell and Rem.

Invid Cougar

Invid Cougars.

EPISODE 3

WEDDING DAY

timeframe: 2022
locations: Robotech Factory, moon of Fantoma
characters: as in previous episodes with exception of Invid Regent and Invid.
Important Character Point: Real introduction of Karen Penn.

1. Dr. Lang is in the Robotech Research Laboratory on board the Robotech Factory. He is discussing the upcoming mission of the Robotech Expeditionary Force with his colleague and old friend Dr. Penn. They are discussing the new designs of the Alpha Fighter which is still in prototype stage.

2. Karen Penn interrupts the informal meeting to talk to her father. She is hoping that he will put in a good word for her to be included on the roster of cadets which will be accompanying the R.E.F. into hyper-space.

3. Dr. Lang takes notice of Karen. She thinks that she might be able to take advantage of Lang's interest. He invites her to come with him to the wedding of Rick and Lisa.

4. Jack is studying in his room, alone, when he receives a message. It is an invitation to the wedding of Rick and Lisa. There is

Rick Hunter and Lisa Hayes at their wedding.

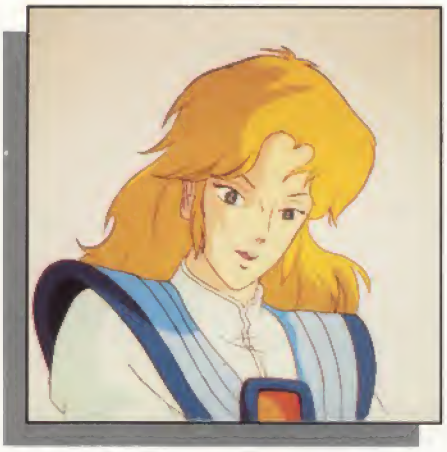
The wedding party: Dana Sterling, Breetai, Lisa Hayes, the minister, Rick Hunter, Max Sterling, and Bowie Grant.

Rick and Lisa; Lisa is preparing to throw her bouquet.

Rick and Lisa dancing at wedding reception.

Karen Penn at wedding reception.

Jean and Bowie Grant at wedding reception.



Karen Penn.

Max Sterling and Rick Hunter.

Invid Cougar ensnared by Cabell.

also a personal note attached from Rick who notes that he would be grateful if Jack would come.

5. Rick and Max are talking about Jack. Rick says that Jack reminds him of himself when he was a young pilot. He feels that Jack is troubled, as he was, and Rick would like to be of some help to him (much in the same way as Roy Fokker had helped Rick during the First Robotech War).

6. Cabell and Rem are watching the progress of the "Cougar" as it prowls the deserted streets of the capital city of the Robotech Masters' homeworld. They talk about the fact that the Cougar can never detect them where they are. Rem says it might be valuable to capture a Cougar to study how to defeat it. Cabell reluctantly agrees.

7. Rem and Cabell capture the Cougar.

8. The Wedding Ceremony. All of the major players are present. It is an epic affair held in the Robotech Factory in the shadow of the SDF-3 which is still under construction. There is some question as to who will give the bride away. The mystery is solved when Lisa walks down the isle with Breetai. It is a gesture of complete friendship and a hope for peace.

9. The celebration following the ceremony.

10. Minmei and Janice sing a duet.

11. Dana and Bowie play throughout the wedding celebration. They are getting into everything.

12. Lisa throws her bouquet to the crowd of single girls. Minmei comes up with the prized flowers. It is a Western tradition which indicates that the person who catches the bouquet is the next to be wed. Minmei has mixed emotions after catching the bouquet. She watches as Rick and Lisa bid good night to their guests as they prepare to retire for the evening.

EPISODE 4

SECOND THOUGHTS

timeframe: 2022
locations: Earth, Robotech Factory, moon of Fantoma
main characters: as in previous episodes. Special attention to Dana and Bowie.
concept: Max, Miriya, Vince, and Jean all decide to leave their childen on the Earth as they prepare to go on the mission. Minmei wants to wish Rick and Lisa a final farewell before the mission is launched.

1. Workers are cleaning up following the wedding celebration. The shuttle is filling up with guests returning to the Earth. Max, Miriya, Vince, and Jean escort their children onto the shuttle. Rolf Emerson is in the background.

2. The parents tell their children that they must return to earth. They explain their reasons—it will be safer on the earth. The trip to Fantoma is filled with too many unknown variables. The children are too young to make the journey. There are no children on the mission. Rolf Emerson will take care of Bowie, Dana will stay with Max's family back on Earth—She will be able to live with cousins

and learn the importance of family life. When the mission is over they will all return and have a wonderful life together. The children are crying but they say that they understand.

3. Janice and Minmei get on the shuttle. The parents leave the shuttle as it prepares to launch. The parents watch from an observation window as the ship leaves for Earth. Earth can be seen in the background.

4. On the moon of Fantoma Rem and Cabell are trying to dissect the "Cougar" which they have captured. As soon as they try to open the "killer machine" the body crumbles into dust.

5. The Inorganics discover a video document which shows that the Robotech Masters have left on a journey.

Lisa Hayes.

6. The Inorganics communicate with the Regent this valuable information. The Regent sends a division of Invid back to the moon of Fantoma to investigate further.

7. Minmei is looking into the nighttime sky. She is thinking to herself that Rick and Lisa still do not know that she has forgiven them. She thinks that it might be nice to tell them one last time that she has truly forgiven them. She convinces Janice to go with her in her Fan Jet to wish them a final farewell—it may be the last time she sees them. No one can predict the future.

8. The selection of the R.E.F. is made to a large assembled crowd. It is decided that only 10,000 troops will go on the journey. The majority of those troops have already volunteered. Now Dr. Lang announces his choices for cadet candidates. Both Jack and Karen are selected.

9. They react differently. Karen is very smug because she felt that she was destined to go. Jack is overwhelmed because he really wanted to go.

10. The unveiling of the SDF-3. It is sent out of the Robotech Factory. Lisa is on the bridge giving orders. She prepares for the journey by piloting the giant interstellar ship into position for the space fold operation. Everyone on the bridge is impressed at the professionalism which Lisa displays. Unfortunately the radar operator fails to notice Minmei's fan jet approaching. They are all caught up in the excitement of the moment.

Crew of SDF-3 lining up for immunizations.

11. The space fold is engaged. Janice and Minmei are caught in the vortex of the warp phenomenon. They are drawn into space without any warning.

12. Dr. Lang hopes that the ship's space fold mechanism will be able to hold up to the pressure of carrying this much weight through hyperspace. The Trojan Horse Strategy has placed the entire Robotech Expeditionary Force armada inside the gutted interior of the giant space battle fortress. The added weight might be too much.

13. The ship materializes from hyperspace near Fantoma. Breetai and Exedore confirm this fact.

14. Radar confirms that they are being approached by a "welcoming party." At first the group thinks that is an envoy mission from the Robotech Masters. But Breetai warns that it is actually the Invid (left as a patrol force by the Regent).

15. Janice and Minmei are both unconscious in the Fan Jet as it floats helplessly in space—having successfully made the journey through hyperspace. Still no one on the SDF-3 knows that the Fan Jet has been brought through hyperspace.

16. Rick steps in to order the Robotech Defense Force troops into action to answer the threat posed by the Invid—they have to maintain their false identity as the returning SDF-3 in the chance that the Robotech Masters are monitoring the battle. The ships prepare to launch.

17. Cabell and Rem notice the SDF-3 appearing from hyperspace and see it as the return of the Robotech Masters' ship and potential salvation.

EPISODE 5

THE BATTLE FOR FANTOMA

timeframe: 2022
location: the moon of Fantoma and surrounding space.
characters: the Robotech Expeditionary Force. The Inorganics, a division of Invid and the citizens of Fantoma—most significantly Rem & Cabell.
special plot developments: Colonel Wolfe distinguishes himself in battle and rescues Minmei—begins their ill-fated relationship.

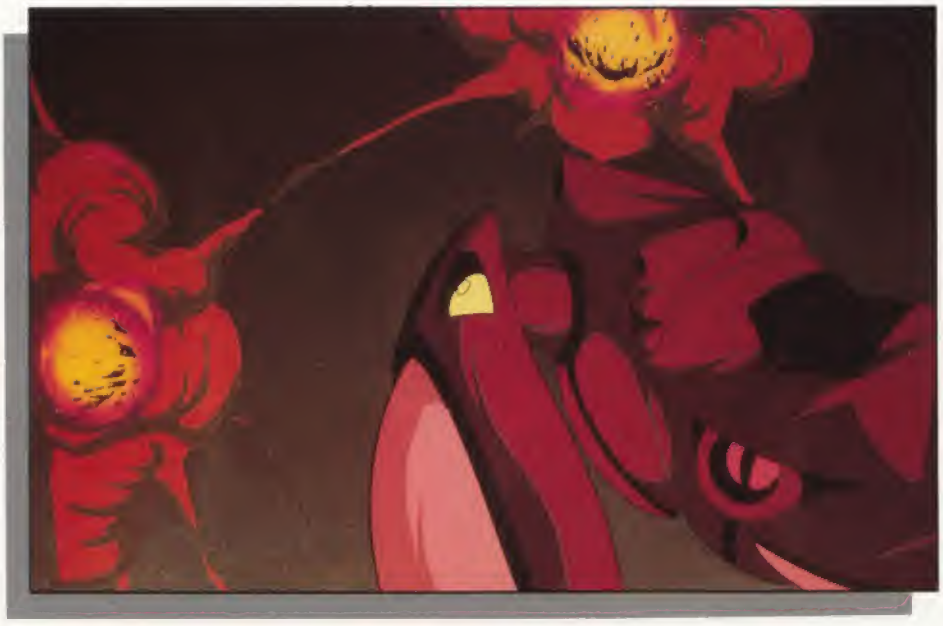
1. The Robotech Expeditionary Force launches its attack against the Invid. The mecha used are various "battloids" and the improved veritech fighter, the veritech hover-tank and the prototype armored alpha fighter.

2. Max Sterling and Johnathan Wolfe lead various squadrons. Max leads the Skull Squadron. Johnathan Wolfe leads an airborne infantry group of hover tanks nicknamed "The Wolfe

Alpha fighters in battle.

Alpha fighters.

Invid Scout Ship in battle.



Pack." B. D. Edwards is in the war room with Rick Hunter—Edwards is Hunter's second in command and is in charge of selected defense plans at the SDF-3. Rick is in command of the offensive plans. Rick does not like Edwards but realizes his professionalism.

3. The Invid attack in Standard Invid Shocktroopers, Armored Invid Shocktroopers and Invid Officer units. The Invid Scout ships are not used at this time.

4. As the fighting rages on, Col. Wolfe notices Minmei's fan jet. He requests permission to rescue the earth ship.

5. Back on Fantoma Cabell and Rem notice the battle and recognize that the fighters coming from the returning SDF ship are not from Zor's original mission. But as far as they are concerned, any help that their planet can get to destroy the Inorganics and the Invid will be greatly appreciated.

6. The R.E.F. soundly defeat the Invid before they can contact the Regent.

7. Dr. Lang goes to check on the condition of Minmei and Janice. He is pleased to note that they are fine. He tells the two women to relax and he will deal with their problem later. Long treats Janice with an odd familiarity.

8. Edward suggests that a mission be sent to the surface of the moon of Fantoma to survey the situation and act as a potential envoy if approached by the Robotech Masters or the Invid—they must know who controls this homeworld. Col. Wolfe volunteers his "Wolfe Pack." Hunter agrees. But also insists that a Ground-based Mobile Unit (GMU) accompany the squadron of Veritech Hover Tanks. Vince Grant is in command of the GMU.

9. They are given specific orders not to fire without provocation.

10. Jack and Karen are assigned as trainees on the GMU.

On-screen graphics of Alpha fighter in Alpha soldier mode.

Actual Alpha fighter in Alpha soldier mode.

Rem and Cabell's lab on Tirol.

Karen Penn meets Jack Baker.

Karen is assigned to assist the navigator, Jack is to observe the functions of the gunnery officer. Jack takes notice of this beautiful woman and attempts to strike up a conversation. She does not respond. Her superior attitude is displayed in all its full fury. This only makes Jack more resolved to continue to pursue this relationship. Exedore is also on board the GMU to act as an ambassador for the REF.

11. The mission is launched to the moon of Fantoma.

12. The large living brain which controls the Inorganics buzzes with electrical activity as the Inorganics prepare to defend their new "Invid Colony" against this invasion.

13. Cabell and Rem realize that they must do something or their "Liberators" will be doomed.

Karen Penn and Jack Baker.

Minmei and Janice meet Johnathan Wolfe.

WEEK TWO

EPISODE 6

HUNTER'S MOON

timeframe: 2022
location: SDF-3, moon of Fantoma
major characters: as in previous episodes.

1. The Wolfe Pack enters the capital city of the Robotech Masters. They walk into a trap.

2. The Inorganics put up tremendous resistance. They are responsible for heavy casualties in the ranks of the Robotech Expeditionary Force.

3. Rick Hunter is shocked to see his troops suffer such losses. Casualties are high.

4. Vince Grant has turned the GMU into a mobile hospital. His wife is working on many of the wounded.

5. Wolfe is worried about Minmei which is affecting his judgment.

6. Rem and Cabell watch the Inorganics devastate the ranks of the Hover Tanks and ground based weapons systems. (The Inorganics are ground based—and are most effective in

Bioroid defenders of Tirol.

Invid Cougar ready to attack Tirol defender.

Minmei brushes off a distressed Johnathan Wolfe.

close combat.)

7. Rem and Cabell note that there are guards surrounding the royal hall of the Robotech Masters—these guards never leave. They deduce that they must be guarding something important. They are right—inside the royal hall is where the Regent has placed the living computer which controls the actions of the Inorganics.

8. The Cougars attack the fallen veritech weapon systems attempting to rip the pilots out of their helpless mecha. It is a very dramatic situation.

9. Minmei rushes onto the Bridge of the SDF-3 to plead with Lisa to do something to save the Wolfe Pack. Lisa says that those decisions are in the hands of Col. B. D. Edwards. Rick is in command of the air force. Minmei bursts into the war room to confront Edwards.

10. Edwards says that his hands are tied. Regulations cannot be broken. Until the combat troops call for air support Hunter is unable to do anything.

11. Minmei asks why no air support was called for.

12. Edwards notes that apparently Wolfe thinks he is in control of the situation.

13. In reality Wolfe is not thinking straight. He is worried for Minmei. As he ponders his dilemma Minmei comes over the radio and pleads with Wolfe to ask for air support to get his troops out of danger. Hearing Minmei's voice is enough to snap Wolfe out of his stupor.

14. Air Support is called for. Rick Hunter responds by sending Max Sterling and the Skull Squad to the rescue.

15. They succeed in driving back the Inorganics for the time being giving the Wolfe Pack and the Robotech Expeditionary Force a chance to regroup.

Miriya Sterling.

Bioroid defender of Tirol preparing to shoot down Invid invaders.

Abandoned Invid Scout Armor.

EPISODE 7

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

timeframe: 2022
location: SDF-3, moon of Fantoma
characters: as in previous episodes

1. Cabell and Rem discuss the possibility of contacting these troops who are battling with the Inorganics. Breaking radio silence may give their position away. But if these warriors knew of the special significance of the royal hall, they might be able to stage a raid and break the reign of terror presented by the Inorganics. Cabell advises the youth to wait for the right time.

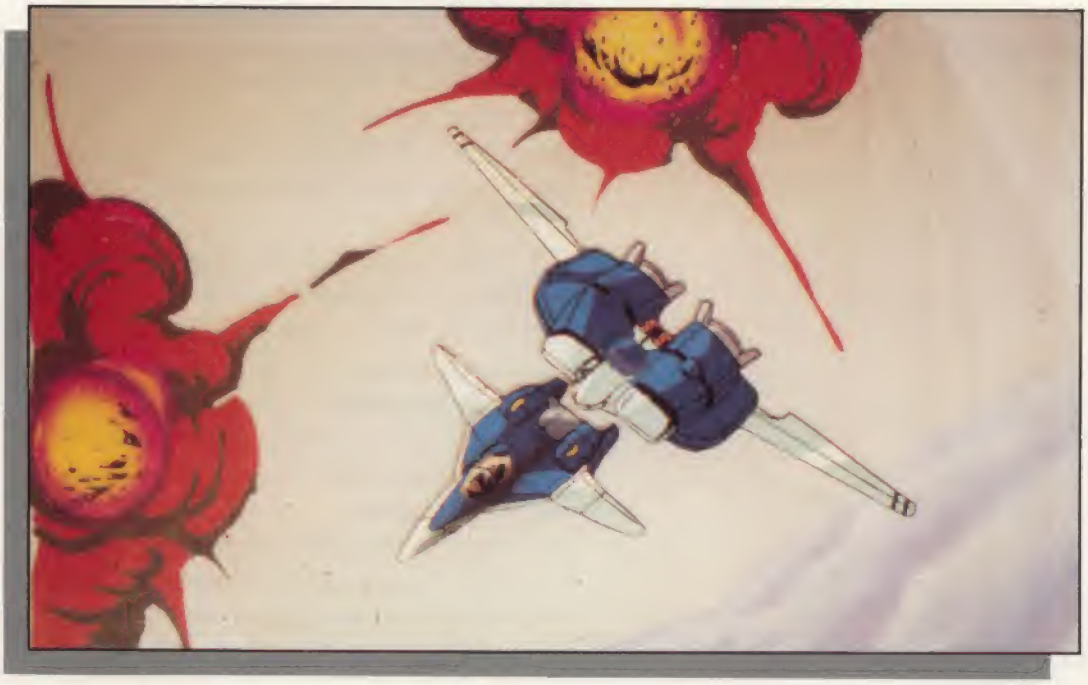
2. Rick and Lisa have an argument. Rick wants to join the Skull Squadron in the battle. Lisa says that his duty is with the main force on the SDF-3.

3. Karen is not willing to help Dr. Jean Grant with the injured onboard the GMU—Karen notes that she is assigned to navigator duty and suggests that someone else dirty their hands with these unfortunate wounded. It is not a very good attitude.

4. Jack overhears the exchange and stops Karen in the corridor to try and explain the situation. He tells her that he does not like

Inhabitants of Tirol defending their home.

Inhabitants of Tirol defending their home.



Alpha fighters in battle.

authority also, but there comes a time when it is important to consider the life of a human being

Jack Baker rushes to assist Karen Penn.

Rick Hunter.

over the particulars of assignments which mean very little in the bigger scheme of things. Karen tells him to mind his own business. Jack persists and asks Karen for a date when this battle is over.

5. Vince is talking with Wolfe about a possible strategy. This new enemy (the Inorganics) seems to feel no pain. It continues to fire even after it has been hit and blown apart by cannon and laser fire.

6. Janice tries to cheer up Minmei who seems overly concerned with the fate of Colonel Wolfe. Minmei notes that her lack of concern lost her one pilot (Rick Hunter) and she is not going to let that happen again. Janice notes that war is a terrible reality which must be faced by all.

7. Exedore is studying the situation. He tells Dr. Lang that he has never experienced advanced fighting machines such as those the R.E.F. is encountering on the streets of the capital city of the Robotech Masters. But he does not think that they are designed by the Robotech Masters. And he also knows that they are not Invid. One thing is for certain—these creatures are perfect killing machines which seem to be controlled by some omnipotent intelligence.

8. Rem finally convinces Cabell to place a call to these warriors—they may be their last chance for liberation. They make radio contact with the GMU and inform Vince Grant of the significance of the Royal Hall.

9. The Cougar picks up the radio signal and attacks the hidden stronghold of Rem and Cabell.

10. They repel the initial attack but are certain that the Cougars will return and break down their defenses. The most they can hope for is that the warriors from the GMU will be able to act on the information they have given. They also hope that they are right in their speculation.

EPISODE 8

SOFT SECTOR

timeframe: 2022
location: SDF-3, moon of Fantoma & Optera (Invid homeworld)
special plot point: This is the episode which explores Jack's heroism.

1. The crew onboard the GMU discusses the situation. They call to Rick Hunter and Edwards onboard the SDF-3, which is still in planetary orbit, for advice.

2. But before anyone can come up with a plan, Jack decides to take matters into his own hands. He walks into the arms storage area and outfits himself with several laser rifles, several bandoliers containing energy cells for the weapons he has chosen. He also grabs a few grenades.

3. Karen notices him in the arms storage area. She starts to argue with him. He tries to restrain her. She defends herself using martial arts techniques. They stop and look at each other. Karen also grabs weapons and ammunition belts. They put on simple body armor and make their way to the staging area where they confiscate two hover cycles.

4. Rick orders the Skull Squadron to fly over the Royal Hall to

see if he can pick up anything with the thermal sensors newly equipped on the veritech fighters.

5. The Inorganics sense the activity. This all leads back to the giant living computer which starts to assign duties and strategically place the Inorganics.

6. The living computer sends a message to the Regent on Optera. Seems that the planet is being invaded by a group of warriors who use protoculture weapons in a way that is totally unique. The conclusion of the computer is that there are other societies and civilizations who have mastered the secrets of Robotechnology stemming from the Invid Flower of Life.

7. This information infuriates the Regent and starts an argument with the Regiss concerning the use of Protoculture. The Regiss decides at this time to leave and pursue her own quest to find the lost protoculture.

8. Jack and Karen are ready to make their move. They activate the automatic door of the staging area and zoom out on their hover cycles. They race back and forth down the narrow streets as they try to avoid ambush from the Inorganics. The lumbering killing machines are slow and are not able to respond quickly to the rapidly darting hover cycles. The Cougars do not have the same disadvantage. They converge and attempt to pounce on the two heroes.

9. Max is flying recon when he picks up the presence of the two on his heat scanner. He calls the Skull Squadron into action. They blast a path for the two foolhardy warriors to the Royal Hall.

10. But before they can make their way to the royal hall, Jack and Karen notice a group of Cougars surrounding what appears to be a blank wall which is alive with electrical activity. They turn off to investigate—someone might be in trouble.

11. It is the secret chamber of Rem and Cabell. Their shielding is about to give way and collapse—which would let the Cougars in to destroy them.

12. Rem and Cabell are rescued by Jack and Karen. It is a dangerous scene which forces them to return to the GMU and not reach their true goal—the royal hall of the Robotech Masters.

Alpha fighters.

Alpha fighters in battle.

EPISODE 9

REVELATIONS

timeframe: 2022
location: SDF-3, moon of Fantoma, Optera (homeworld of the Invid)
characters: same as in previous episode

1. Dr. Lang interviews Rem and Cabell. They are introduced as the members of the Robotech Masters' civilization. They want to know what happened to the crew of SDF-1. Dr. Lang tells the story of the First Robotech War very quickly.

2. Rem and Cabell are shocked. They then tell the story of the Robotech Masters' journey back to the Earth to finish the job that the Zentraedi were unable to do.

3. Edwards notes that the REF should get back to the Earth and set up a defense system.

4. Dr. Lang was hoping that he would be able to fix the system before he had to let everyone know, but now he feels that he must tell the assembled group that the Fold system has a minor malfunction due primarily from the fact that his one system was responsible for warping too much weight through hyperspace at one time—the Trojan Horse concept backfires on the Robotech Defense Force once again.

5. The only hope for ever returning to Earth is to set up a base

on this moon and begin a small research facility to fabricate small warp drive mechanisms. Cabell notes that the only way to make the warp drive mechanisms is by using material which exists only on the planet Fantoma. Dr. Lang then notes that that is why they were never really able to make the system work right back on earth. (The similar ore of Earth is too weak to handle the massive strain which is put on it.)

6. Rem notes that there is still the problem of the Inorganics. And he notes that it would be better if the REF did not blow his homeworld apart to destroy the invaders. Everyone tries to prepare a plan in regard to reclaiming the planet for Rem and Cabell's people.

7. Janice notices Rem as he is leaving the meeting. She has a strange reaction. She tells Minmei who notes that perhaps Janice is falling in love—Minmei says it does happen to everyone.

8. Back on Optera, the Regent dispatches a small division of Invid Shocktroops to deal with the insurrection on the moon of Fantoma. He is trying to deal with the disintegration of his society—now that the Regiss has left with half of his tribe.

9. A planning session by the REF works out the details of a raiding party designed to infiltrate the royal hall and deactivate whatever mechanism which controls the Inorganics. Rick Hunter and Colonel Edwards also volunteer to participate in the mission—they feel their presence will be necessary—also Rick is longing for a chance to get into the action of combat.

10. The crew of the GMU defend against a small skirmish while Dr. Jean Grant looks after Karen and Jack's minor wounds following their daring raid.

EPISODE 10

THE LIBERATORS

Timeframe: 2022
locations: moon of Fantoma, SDF-3
characters: same as in previous episodes

1. The Invid reinforcements arrive. The SDF-3 sends out a series of veritech fighters to engage the enemy in space combat.

2. Lisa argues with Rick about his choice to go into battle. He tells her that it is his duty.

3. Jack volunteers to join the groundbased attack. Karen also volunteers—the two young heroes are always interested in competing with one another.

4. Minmei meets with Johnathan Wolfe. They try to tell each other how they feel. It is a rather awkward scene which is broken when Janice enters with Rem. They are all introduced. Wolfe takes the opportunity to leave with Rem to discuss battle plans.

5. Max and Rick are in the hangar going over equipment on their veritech fighters. Max asks if Rick is sure this is what he wants to do—suggesting that Rick might be a little rusty as a combat pilot. Rick says that he is ready for the fight.

6. A coordinated effort to attack the royal hall which contains the living computer. The fighting is fierce.

7. The Invid join in the fight on the surface of the Moon of Fantoma.

8. A small group led by Colonel Edwards makes their way into the chamber and deactivates the system. (They do not destroy it. Later Edwards reactivates the system in an attempt to stage a coup!)

9. The Inorganics become "lifeless" hunks of metal and glass.

10. Everyone stages a celebration as the imprisoned members of Cabell's tribe are set free.

11. The atmosphere of joy is broken when Dr. Lang is given the announcement that a new armada is spotted heading toward Fantoma. This small fleet should arrive within a few hours.

WEEK THREE

THE COMING OF THE SENTINELS

The concept of this week's worth of episodes is to advance the plot to include the Sentinels—a group of aliens from various planets who have formed a federation to rid the universe of the Invid threat.

Also there is the encampment of the REF on the moon of Fantoma while the hyperspace warp drive mechanisms are constructed. It will be an area to develop the relationship between Lisa and Karen, this is also the part of the story in which Dr. Lang shows that Janice is actually an android—as he reprograms her to function as a soldier and join the Sentinels. This will be the time also to introduce plot points concerning the mission to join the Sentinels and resign the commission in the REF for Rick and his friends. It will also be the time in which Edwards sees his opportunity to take over.

The Invid continue to try and recapture the moon of Fantoma. The Sentinels decide to take the fight to their enemies. The mission of the Sentinels is launched.

WEEK FOUR

THE LIBERATION OF CARBONARA

During this week's episodes, the fighting skill of the Sentinels will be defined.

The flagship of the Sentinels remains in orbit around Carbonara. The GMU is transported to the surface of the planet. It is a hostile terrain—made up mostly of rocks and petrified forests. The Sentinels land in an area which is uninhabited. They hope the element of surprise will be to their advantage in dealing with the Invid or the Inorganics. The protoculture-based weapons systems attract the Cougars—the skills of the Gnea and Bela and the power of Veidt and Sarna is illustrated.

Lron and Crysta take the Sentinels into an underground world where they encounter beasts native to the planet before they reach the limits of the capital city of Carbonara and battle with the Inorganics—the Sentinels win—the Carbonites want Lron and Crysta to stay—they refuse the offer at this time—they must stay with their friends until the Invid are defeated.

WEEK FIVE

THE LIBERATION OF PRAXIS

During this week's episode, the battle for Praxis forms the core of the storyline—however, the focus of the individual episodes allows the audience to observe what is happening on the moon of Fantoma while Edwards tries to undermine the power of Dr. Lang and also deal with his growing infatuation with Lynn Minmei. Jack and Karen are trying to understand their love/ hate relationship. They both need each other but they are too proud to admit it. Rick and Lisa are falling more and more in love. Lisa has become a warrior woman much like Bela and Gnea. This new direction for Lisa is quite exciting for Rick. The planet Praxis is devoid of men—which makes for some interesting plot developments. The fight to liberate Praxis is long and difficult. It takes nearly a year. The Invid understand the operation of the Sentinels and have sent reinforcements to help the Inorganics quash the civil rebellion which is overtaking their crumbling empire—the Invid were not made to be rulers of the universe—it is merely their own warped sense of destiny which propels them to this role. Janice as an android recognizes the soul of Zor in Rem, which frightens her.

WEEK SIX

FINAL BATTLE ON PRAXIS AND JOURNEY TO GARUDA

The final battle to liberate Praxis starts off the week. In the meantime, the REF on the moon of Fantoma must deal with a planned invasion by the Invid. Lynn Minmei is "brainwashed" to forget Johnathan by the diabolical plots of B. D. Edwards. Dr. Lang is beginning to unravel the secrets of protoculture by going over Zor's notes—he recognizes the significance of the "Children of Zor"—the Cha Cha.

Bela and Gnea ride triumphantly into their city on the mechanical horses they use in battle. Their fellow citizens are ecstatic. Many of the men from the Sentinels group are asked to stay on and develop a new society on Praxis. The offer is quite tempting and several earthborn Sentinels decide to stay. Jack Baker attempts to make Karen jealous by offering to stay on Praxis. She puts up a fight—which by Praxiam law demands a duel for his life—on Praxis the males are highly prized. Karen wins but tells Jack that she only did it for his own good. They journey to Garuda as Learna and Kami tell their fellow Sentinels about the unique atmosphere of Garuda—a fearful place where caution is the only rule.

WEEK SEVEN

THE LIBERATION OF GARUDA

The Sentinels arrive at this dark and mysterious planet. They must not only deal with the Inorganics but their own fears and nightmares—it is the nature of the atmosphere of Garuda to transform thoughts into flesh and blood. The situation is equally disturbing for all concerned. Certain elements from the past come back to haunt the people from Earth. Rick has a nightmare in which he is lost from Lisa. He is subjected to all manner of dreambeasts. Kami and Learna have tried to teach their fellowship how to control their mind—but the novelty of the situation and the power of the subconscious cause many people to become affected. Rem is the most affected—his dreams, as Zor, of the planet Optera where he was ordered by his superiors to destroy the society of the Invid. The Invid cannot survive on Garuda because of the atmosphere—but his dreambeast Invid thrive on the environment. The Inorganics are suited to this environment—they are not alive. The battles with the Inorganics are fierce—a situation is developed in which the Sentinels must fight with "monsters from the Id." Eventually they defeat the Inorganics and move on.

WEEK EIGHT

THE LIBERATION OF HAYDON IV AND EDWARDS' INVID PACT

The Sentinels move toward the planet Haydon IV. They are intrigued by the idea of a planet which uses magic. It is a novelty to the earthborn heroes who rely on technology for everything. Veidt and Sarna are trying to explain the differences between magic and science. The concept of their society is that scientific experimentation is a fallacy—on Haydon IV experiments are conducted time after time until the result is what was dreamed of by the scientist. In this way they feel that the laws of the universe are meant to be broken. The Invid have a strong base on Haydon IV and the fight to liberate the planet is dangerous and costly. Miriya goes into a deep sleep on the planet which forces Max to stay behind when the liberating Sentinels move on.

On the moon of Fantoma, Dr. Lang is progressing on his warp drive. He sends a test flight back to the Earth to check the mechanism—the test flight never returns. Edwards makes a secret pact with the Invid in a bid to gain power and return to Earth as a conqueror after the Invid are through with it.

WEEK NINE

THE LIBERATION OF SPHERIS

The Sentinels realize the delicate nature of the planet Spheris, therefore they determine to approach the planet without the use of Protoculture weapons. It is a chance to see if they can function effectively using non-protoculture based weapons. If they are successful they feel that they might be able to attempt a raid on the homeworld of the Invid and defeat the Regent—thus putting a stop to the entire Invid threat.

Karen is a key factor in this liberation raid. The small group of Sentinels which attempt to defeat the Inorganics on Spheris are the equivalent of interstellar "ninja." They dress in dark clothes and use simple weapons and rely on martial arts. Gnea and Bela are instrumental in this fight as are Veidt and Sarna. It is a battle scenario in which the main group of Earth heroes take a back seat to the action and let the aliens function—everyone has learned much from each other and the time for self-reliance has come to the Sentinels—Baldan and Teal lead the group into the fight. Max realizes that Miriya is pregnant. While the covert operation continues on Spheris the rest of the Sentinels journey to Peryton.

WEEK TEN

THE LIBERATION OF PERYTON

The nature of Peryton is a big mystery to the majority of the Sentinels—the earthborn heroes have no idea of the peculiar character of the planet and its curse. Burak is hoping that the Sentinels will not only defeat the Inorganics and liberate the planet—but also break the curse instilled upon the generations of his people. His zeal in trying to deceive the Sentinels rather than coming out and asking for their help causes the group to fall prey to the curse of the plant. It isn't until Max and Miriya who have rejoined the Sentinels on Spheris, explain the true nature of Peryton which they saw in a dream, that the remaining Sentinels construct a plan to free their comrades. Many heroes lose their lives in the process. This will be the point of revelation for many of the characters in the series. Rem learns of his true origin. Janice drops her guise as a woman and continues through the rest of the series as a "sexy robot."

The time has come to return to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters and rejoin the REF. They have spent too long away from their own people and planet.

WEEK ELEVEN

THE SENTINEL JOURNEY TO OPTERA

Following their experience on Peryton, the Sentinels decide to split up. One group headed by Johnathan Wolfe and Vince Grant plans to return to the moon of Fantoma. This group also contains Anoris, Max, Miriya, and Lisa—The remaining Earthborn Sentinels (including Rick, Jack, Karen, Jean Grant and Janice (now a sexy robot) join with Rem and the other aliens to approach the Invid—Rem has recalled the secrets of protoculture and will offer it to the Invid as a way to stop the war.

Dr. Lang is isolated—lost in his research. Edwards is trying to make a pact with the Regent who has journeyed to the moon of Fantoma. Breetai tries to reason with Edwards. Breetai is branded as a traitor and is hunted by the REF. Breetai heads toward Fantoma to avoid capture.

The Sentinels meet resistance on Optera. The telepath Veidt ultimately senses that the Regent has traveled to Fantoma to make a deal with Edwards. Edwards traps the Regent and assassinates him. He climbs into the Regent's exo-skeleton to control the Inorganics and Invid.

WEEK TWELVE

THE REBELLION OF EDWARDS

Edwards lays his cards on the table. He calls for the troops to follow him to destroy the Invid threat to the Earth. Johnathan Wolfe wants to wait until the Sentinels return. Edwards tells the REF that the Sentinels are only looking out for their own planets and do not care for the Earth. Johnathan tries to get back to Minmei. She refuses to see him, telling him that they have nothing to talk about. She now is devoted to Edwards' cause for liberation of Earth. Johnathan agrees to lead an advance force to Earth to survey the situation—to see if either the Invid or the Robotech Masters have made the journey to their homeworld. He hopes that this will prove to Minmei that he loves her and embraces Edwards' cause—but sometimes love is blind. They must also test Lang Warp drive.

As soon as Wolfe leaves, Edwards stages a coup using the Inorganics and his few loyal followers from the REF to place Dr. Lang and the rest of the heroes—Lisa, Max, etc. under arrest. Breetai tries to stage a rescue and is mortally wounded. Anoris requests to see his friend before he dies.

WEEK THIRTEEN

THE RETURN OF RICK HUNTER

The Sentinels arrive at the moon of Fantoma. They are immediately attacked by the Invid and the Inorganics controlled by Edwards. The final battles are fought for the control of the REF and the future of Robotechnology. Rem cannot believe that the Regent is Dead—he feels responsible for turning the Invid into a savage culture. He must make an ultimate sacrifice in order to satisfy his warped sense of right and wrong. Rick Hunter cannot attack the capital city for fear of injuring his wife who he learns is going to have a child. The only solution is to fight using the Sentinels' methods. Rick has learned mind control from the Garudians and tries to exercise this skill in a battle with Edwards. The duel is fought with the fate of several civilizations hanging in the balance. Rem tries to get into the Invid Regent's exoskeleton (the Odeon). He cannot control the system. The Inorganics go wild. They begin tearing up everything. It is a sad situation. The REF is helpless. Eventually they overwhelm the Inorganics and restore order. They make the long journey back to Earth and Rick and his friends on the SDF-3 are lost in space.

PART THREE

THE MOVIE

The world created in the Robotech Universe is quite complex. Many situations are simply taken for granted. One of these "givens" concerns the Robotech Masters. How did they come to Earth and how did the Robotech Defense Force seem so prepared to defend against them? The answers to these questions form the basis of *Robotech The Movie.* The time frame of this film falls between what has been called the "first" and "second" generation. In terms of actual plot points, the SDF-3 has already departed for points unknown to search for the homeworld of the Robotech Masters. Therefore Rick Hunter, Lisa Hayes and the other survivors the final battle against Khyron and the Zentraedi fleet are not seen in *Robotech The Movie.* Rather, this film presents an untold story from the Robotech Universe, a story which tells of Earth's first encounter with the Robotech Masters. There will be familiar characters, most notably General Leonard, Rolf Emerson, Colonel Green and the villainous Robotech Masters. There will also be familiar mecha and weapons systems. The Veritech Hover Tank and the Ajax (Veritech Attack Copter) play an important role in the story of *Robotech The Movie.* But more importantly, an entirely new story will be presented. New characters and new plot lines will be introduced to enhance the scope of the *Robotech* story. There was no point in simply rehashing the *Robotech* story for the big screen. The hard-core *Robotech* fans would not buy it, and the story is too complicated to tell in a 90-minute format. Working under this philosophy, Harmony Gold opted for a new storyline in keeping with the established plot of the series. Now when someone views *Robotech The Movie* they see a film produced in 35 mm with full stereophonic sound and 6-track Dolby "surround sound." It becomes a unique theatrical experience that can be enjoyed by everyone (whether they know the original story of *Robotech* or somehow have remained a "protoculture virgin" after all this time).

Rest assured that the movie contains all the elements which make the *Robotech* series unique. Romance, drama, superior graphic design, intelligent science fiction, music, action and a sense of the future can all be found in *Robotech The Movie.*

SYNOPSIS

The year is 2027. The Earth is rebuilding following an unsuccessful alien invasion which took place fifteen years earlier. The United Earth Government has begun research on a miraculous alien science known as "Robotechnology." As far as the world leaders are concerned, the Earth is safe from any further threat of alien invasion. Unfortunately, these world leaders are not aware of a second alien armada which has made the journey to Earth through hyperspace and now plans to avenge the destruction of their original fleet and recapture the secrets of their lost technology.

To do this these aliens, calling themselves the Robotech Masters, devise a plan to infiltrate the ranks of the military branch of the United Earth Government and catch their enemies off guard.

Their plan is simple. Bioroid Warriors capture Colonel B. D. Andrews, a high-ranking military officer assigned to the Northern Province of the Far East Sector of the newly reconstructed Earth—the home of the Robotech Research Center. By a sophisticated method of bio-genetic engineering, The Robotech Masters construct a clone of Colonel Andrews. This clone will return to Earth and be the means by which the Robotech Masters gather

information and ultimately form a strategy to defeat the forces of the United Earth Government. The simulagent of Andrews succeeds in taking over the Robotech Research Center and begins subspace transmission of information from data banks salvaged from the original alien ship which crashed on Earth and began the whole inter-galactic war. The Robotech Masters' plan would have gone without a hitch if it weren't for Todd Harris, a soldier involved in the initial battle where Andrews is captured. Todd does not buy Andrews' explanation of the battle in the Northern Province of the Far East Sector. Todd feels as though Andrews is concealing something. He goes A.W.O.L. and steals a powerful mobile database terminal, the MODAT 5. Todd's only hope for getting to the bottom of this mystery is his best friend Mark Landry and a shadowy figure known only as Eve.

Agents working for Colonel Andrews break up a meeting between Todd and Mark. Mark manages to get away on the MODAT 5. Todd is not so lucky. And now what started out as a reunion with an old friend turns into a nightmare of intrigue and danger for Mark Landry. Mark's search to find out what has happened to Todd leads him into a maze of confusion and an ultimate rendezvous with Eve.

Mark is told by his girlfriend Becky Franklin that the only Eve she knows is a popular rock star who hosts a television program. Mark attempts to contact Eve and get to the bottom of the mystery of Todd Harris and the Modat 5. Unknown to Mark, Andrews' agents are able to track down the Modat 5 with the help of Eve. They stage an ambush for the unsuspecting youth. Mark manages to elude the trap. His search for the truth leads him to a meeting with Eve. What he discovers when he comes face to face with Eve confuses him even more. It turns out that Eve is nothing more than a holographic projection—a computer-generated image which everyone thinks is real. Mark's entire world is crumbling around him. Eventually Eve contacts Mark and gives him information concerning the threat posed by the Robotech Masters. She tries to enlist Mark's aid in exposing this secret invasion. She leads him to the Robotech Research Center and the massive super-computer which generates Enhanced Video Emulation (E.V.E.). Here, following an attack by sophisticated Robotech weapons systems, Mark succeeds in defeating Andrews. The alien simulagent takes this opportunity to confuse the issues. After this impromptu meeting Mark is even less sure of the truth. He is told by Andrews that Todd is wanted for questioning. He is told that Todd has gone over the edge and suffers from paranoia. The entire story about the supposed alien invasion was merely a fabrication constructed by the E.V.E. Computer to bring the Modat 5 back to the Robotech Research Center. Mark does not believe Andrews. It all seems too convenient, too neat to be the truth. Mark leaves, taking the Modat 5 with him. He warns Andrews to stay away or he will expose what he and his friends know about the "alien invasion" to the media.

Unknown to Mark, General Rolf Emerson under direct orders from the Supreme Command of the United Earth Government is engaging the alien fleet in space. They attack using a battle plan devised by the E.V.E. computer programmed by Col. Andrews. The results of the battle leave the Earth forces crippled and virtually helpless if the aliens should decide to stage a full scale invasion.

Mark tries to explain his problems to Becky, but they fall on deaf ears. Becky is trying to

pursue her career as a dancer and she feels that Mark has been drifting out of her life. Mark cannot convince her of the danger he senses. He tries to put it all behind him and accompanies Becky to a rehearsal only to be outmaneuvered by Roger Burke, the sly director of Becky's musical. Mark's life has become a total mess. He manages to redeem his self-respect when he saves Becky from a compromising situation with Roger. Becky doesn't appreciate Mark's interference and tells him to leave her alone.

The alien plan is getting closer to completion. Programmers in the Robotech Research Center feel that the broadcasts ordered by Andrews are not correct. They contact Daryl Embrey, the minister of computer science, and tell him of Andrews' mysterious transmission. Embrey orders the transmissions to stop. This forces Andrews to take matters into his own hands. He stages a military takeover of the provisional government of the Far East Sector. He uses the take-over to initiate martial law and track down the Modat 5. He succeeds in finding and killing Kelly Stevens, a twenty-year old film-student who along with Becky, Mark and Stacey Embrey have made a film of the Modat. When Mark discovers this brutal act, it turns him into an impassioned avenger. He vows to find those responsible and make them pay. His first stop is the massive underground computer complex.

Following a battle with Andrews' forces, Mark eventually comes face to face with the alien simulagent. Andrews defeats him and leaves him for dead. Andrews only concern is Minister Embrey. He is the only factor standing in the way of the Robotech Masters' plan to defeat the Earth.

Eve revives the fallen youth and implores him to fight for his world. He is the only one who can stop Andrews and save the Earth. He makes a supreme sacrifice and drags his battered body into the battle once again. Eve promises to help the Robotech Defense Force defeat the Robotech Masters. Together they might succeed in saving the planet from destruction.

Mark appropriates a powerful weapons system and stages an all-out attack against Andrews' troops. While he battles for the lives of his friends, Rolf Emerson, with the aid of the E.V.E. computer, defeats the armada of the Robotech Masters. Mark must face Andrews for the third time. Driven by courage and fueled by vengeance, Mark defeats Andrews. The world is safe—for the moment.

CHARACTER LIST

MARK LANDRY: Twenty-year-old engineering student who works as a mechanic at "Pop's Bike Repair" in the civilian section of the main urban center of the newly reconstructed Far East Sector of the Earth following an intergalactic war circa 2012. Mark Landry becomes involved in a plot to uncover a secret invasion planned by the Robotech Masters. Mark must become a hero as he helps to protect his home-world from certain destruction at the hands of a ruthless alien invasion force.

Mark's life is complicated by the fact that nobody believes him—not even his girlfriend, Becky Franklin. Becky feels as though Mark is losing interest in their relationship. And so, amidst this background of inter-galactic intrigue, Mark must find a way not only to save his planet, but also to hold onto his future with Becky.

The search for truth eventually leads Mark to a meeting with E.V.E. (a complex alien computer). Working with this Artificial Intelligence, Mark learns of the threat posed by a secret alien invasion strikeforce and battles the evil warriors of Robotech Masters to save his world from defeat.

COLONEL B. D. ANDREWS: Originally a brave leader in the Robotech Defense Force, Colonel Andrews becomes a tool used by the Robotech Masters to infiltrate the defenses of the United Earth Government and set the stage for their invasion. Colonel Andrews' body is cloned and bio-chemically enhanced with an alien intelligence. In the guise of Colonel Andrews, this alien simulagent takes over the Robotech Computer Complex and begins transmission of sensitive information which the Robotech Masters need in order to carry out their plans of conquest and revenge.

The simulagent of Andrews is a ruthless spy who will stop at nothing to attain his goal. He manipulates the facts in order to confuse his enemies and eventually takes matters into his own hands as he stages a military coup in order to insure the success of his mission.

The one thorn in his side is Mark Landry. They meet in combat three times. The final confrontation forms the finale of a battle which will determine the fate of the Earth.

BECKY FRANKLIN: A twenty-one-year-old dancer who is trying to establish her career in the post-holocaust world of the future. Her one dream is to make it as a popular entertainer. She will do whatever it takes to make it to the top. Even if that means sacrificing her relationship with her boyfriend, Mark Landry.

Becky shares her dreams of success and fame with her roommates Kelly Stevens and Stacey Embrey. Together, these three dreamers are trying to make ends meet in the over-crowded "rat race" of the Twenty-first Century. Things seem a little easier for Becky and her friends seeing that Stacey's father is a high-ranking minister in the newly reorganized United Earth Government.

Becky finds herself involved in the inter-galactic conflict when she and her friends stumble onto a top secret weapons system, the MODAT 5. Her love for Mark is strong enough to survive the rigors of a complex web of intrigue which ultimately determines the fate of an entire world.

MAJOR-GENERAL ROLF EMERSON: Leader of the Air Force of the newly reformed Robotech Defense Forces. Rolf Emerson must pit his warriors against the best an enemy from beyond the stars has to offer. Emerson is constantly trying to save the world from defeat while keeping the loss of his own troops to a minimum. It is only when the E.V.E. computer acts on its own that the tide of battle turns.

EVE: A complex personality. EVE is actually two separate entities. As Eve, the popular musical entertainer, this holographic popstar is the embodiment of glitz and glamor. She is the most famous celebrity to surface in this brave new world.

As E.V.E., a computer program adapted from the original data banks of an alien computer which crashed to Earth in 1999 setting the stage for the intergalactic war which followed, this complex Artificial Intelligence is of the highest order. The E.V.E. computer is unjustly manipulated by an alien simulagent into betraying her adopted planet. It is only with a supreme effort of strength and willpower that she manages to break free from the control of Col. B. D. Andrews and aid the Robotech Defense Force against her former masters.

E.V.E. is the key to the salvation of the Earth. And the only one who really knows her secret is Mark Landry. Together EVE and Mark wage war against the forces of the Robotech Masters.

KELLY STEVENS: A twenty-year-old filmmaker. Kelly is unwittingly caught up in the current inter-galactic war when she makes a film featuring Mark, Becky and the mysterious MODAT 5. The film offers incrimi-

nating evidence which could implicate Col. B. D. Andrews in a plot to overthrow the government and result in charges of treason. Once Andrews declares martial law, Kelly becomes one of the unfortunate victims of the alien invasion plan.

Kelly and her roommates, Becky Franklin and Stacey Embrey, have no idea of the danger which faces them. They only realize the full horror of the alien threat after it is too late. Kelly's dreams are shattered in one brutal act of terrorism.

STACEY EMBREY: Daughter of the minister of Computer Science for the United Earth Government, Stacey Embrey leads a relatively pampered life. Her father allows her to live with her friends in the heart of the civilian sector of the Far East Sector of their newly reconstructed world. Following an intergalactic war which virtually destroyed the Earth, Minister Embrey hopes that this return to "normalcy" will help erase the memory of the death and destruction which took place nearly 15 years earlier. Stacey is a free spirit who does not want to be known as the daughter of an important political figure. She wants to make it on her own.

Her involvement with the current alien threat comes to a head after her father orders her to join him as they flee from the tyranny of Col. B. D. Andrews following his military takeover of the provisional government. Stacey and her father become targets in a diabolical scheme to destroy the defense systems of the United Earth Government. It is up to Mark Landry, with the help of the E.V.E. computer, to rescue Stacey and save their planet from total destruction.

THE ROBOTECH MASTERS: A ruthless band of alien techno-voyagers who have come to the Earth to recapture the secrets of their lost technology and avenge the destruction of an earlier armada at the hands of Earth's Robotech Defense Force. They intend on using cunning and stealth to defeat an enemy whose strength against their army of bioroid warriors has never been tested.

PART FOUR

CHARACTERS AND MECHA

RICK HUNTER

age: 30
rank: Commander in Chief of Robotech Expeditionary Air Force (R.E.A.F.)—later rejects commission to become commander of the Sentinels
sex: male

Rick Hunter grew into manhood during the First Robotech War which took place on the planet Earth during the period A.D. 2009-2013. His rise in military rank from an amateur pilot to commander in chief of the Robotech Air Force is both a testament to Rick Hunter's skill as a pilot and a source of personal frustration. Rick Hunter had very little time to experience the joys of civilian life. His sense of duty and honor forced him to mature before his time.

In the period immediately following the First Robotech War, Rick Hunter, along with his fiancé Lisa Hayes, were instrumental in plans to reconstruct a massive alien battlefortress called SDF-3 and lead an expedition into deep space to prevent any further interstellar war which might destroy the new civilization developing on Earth following the defeat of the Robotech Masters' mercenary army of giants known as Zentraedi.

Rick Hunter eventually rejects his commission as leader of the Robotech Air Force to join a small group of interstellar heroes, the Sentinels, in an attempt to stop a civilization known as the Invid, from completing a plan for domination of the universe.

Rick Hunter is deeply in love with Lisa Hayes, but retains a mild infatuation for Lynn Minmei, a famous celebrity who played a major role in building morale during the First Robotech War.

Rick Hunter is concerned at achieving peace at any cost. His rejection of his military commission and his journey of discovery with the Sentinels will forge a new and stronger personality for this brave, intuitive leader.

LISA HAYES (HUNTER)

Lisa and Rick at wedding.

age: 34
rank: Admiral—Captain of the SDF-3
sex: female
special attributes: unique military status for a woman.

One of the major heroes of the First Robotech War. As senior officer of original SDF-1 and elected Captain of the ill-fated SDF-2, Lisa Hayes is the logical choice to command the flagship of the Robotech Expeditionary Forces—the SDF-3. Her devotion to duty has made her popular with the officers under her command. She *tries* to act as a commanding officer first and a woman second, but her gender sometimes gets in the way. Her long-time courtship to Rick Hunter is finally solidified with their marriage on the eve of the mission of the Robotech Expeditionary Force to travel to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters.

A conflict arises in her relationship with Rick Hunter, when he decides to resign his commission in the Robotech Defense Force to join a group of interstellar freedom fighters calling themselves the Sentinels. She thinks that it is foolish for Rick to give up all he has fought for in order to search through the universe for a powerful alien enemy. Rick convinces her that it is the only way that he can resolve the conflicts which have haunted him since the First Robotech War. Lisa also decides to join with Rick and the Sentinels—as an observer for the Robotech Expeditionary Force—she does not trust the Sentinels at first.

Her skill as a commanding officer has a major effect on the outcome of the Sentinels' mission to defeat the Invid Regent.

MAX STERLING

age: 28
rank: Captain and leader of Skull Squadron of R.E.F.
sex: male

Max Sterling is an ace pilot. He is unassuming and totally without ego. He is a close friend of Rick Hunter and accompanied him on many battles during the First Robotech War. He has a natural genius when it comes to controlling machines—he is a champion on both video games and complex veritech weapons systems.

Following the First Robotech War, Max became the leader of the famed Skull Squadron of the Robotech Defense Force. The Skull Squadron became a key element in the troop deployment of the Robotech Expeditionary Force. The Skull Squad is an elite group of fighters trained to use all of the various mecha in the United Earth Government Robotech Defense Arsenal. Max also feels that it is important that the Skull Squad familiarizes itself with martial arts—his goal as leader of the squad is to create the ultimate soldier.

When Rick Hunter decides to leave the Robotech Expeditionary Force and join with a federation of aliens calling themselves the Sentinels, it is Max who volunteers the Skull Squadron to join with him. The Skull Squad is made up of 12 members, 9 men and 3 women.

Max's personal life is quite unique. During the first Robotech War, he met and fell in love with Miriya, an enemy pilot. Originally a giantess 40 feet tall, Miriya underwent a process known as micronization and shrunk to normal human size. Originally, Miriya was interested in assassinating Max, but after meeting him she also fell in love. Max and Miriya get married. It is a gesture which they hope will unite their two races. Unfortunately the leaders of the Zentraedi force do not understand the meaning of love. Regardless of this the marriage is successful. Max and Miriya have a child—Dana Sterling.

When Max and Miriya join the Robotech Expeditionary Force, they decide to leave their child on the Earth—they deduce that the earth is a safe port and their mission to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters is too dangerous to risk the life of their child. While they are in space Max and Miriya have another child—a girl named Aurora.

Max is a key character in the *Sentinels* saga.

MIRIYA STERLING

age: not determined at this time
rank: Lt. Commander—second in command of the Skull Squadron
sex: female
special characteristics: Biogenetically engineered life form.

Miriya Sterling is a very interesting character. Originally an enemy of the Robotech Defense Force, Miriya was an ace pilot for the Zentraedi Army. Her giant size as a Zentraedi was sacrificed when she felt compelled to micronize her body to infiltrate the Robotech Defense Ship SDF-1 and plot to assassinate her arch-rival, Max Sterling.

An unusual turn of events put a crimp in Miriya's plans for revenge and murder—she fell in love with her target. Their relationship developed as though it was destined to become a reality. Miriya joined her lover and husband as a valuable member of the Robotech Defense Forces. Following the conclusion of the First Robotech War, Max and Miriya devoted their time to creating a special military unit—the Skull Squadron.

As a biogenetically engineered creature, Miriya was not sure if she would be able to have children. As luck would have it she was not sterile, and produced a young daughter—Dana Sterling.

As the time drew near for the United Earth Government to send the Robotech Expeditionary Force on a mission through hyperspace to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters, Max and Miriya decide that it is better to leave their child on Earth due to the fact that there is no guarantee that their mission will be successful and the parents are concerned for the safety of their child. They leave Dana in the care of close friends, who are not in the military and have a young son which Max and Miriya think will be like a young brother to her.

Following the trip to Fantoma—the homeworld of the Robotech Masters, Max and Miriya join with Rick Hunter and his friends to become a Sentinel and search throughout the galaxy to defeat the Invid. Along the way, Max and Miriya have a second child—a young girl named Aurora. They are ultimately separated from the fellowship of the Sentinels on the planet of Magic—Haydon IV, where Miriya falls into a deep fever and Max is told she must stay on the planet until the fever breaks or she will die. Max tells his friends to carry on the mission to find the Invid while he looks after his ill wife and child.

JACK BAKER

age: 16
rank: airman cadet
sex: male

Jack Baker is a sarcastic, cold-hearted rebellious youth who possesses incredible energy and talent. Orphaned during the First Robotech War, Jack joined the Robotech Defense Force to gain revenge on those responsible for his parents' death. His sorrow over the murder of his parents causes Jack to become a loner. But deep in his heart, Jack cares for the weak and defenseless. He is awkward at expressing his feelings and ends up looking like a brat.

He has a built-in dislike for authority. And is shocked when Rick Hunter chooses him to be one of the cadets who are to accompany the Robotech Expeditionary Force on the important mission to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters. His relationship with Rick Hunter seems to parallel Rick's relationship with his own mentor—Roy Fokker—who was killed during the First Robotech War. Rick hopes to mold Jack into a great soldier. Jack merely wants to find revenge.

Jack also wants to find love. He falls for Karen Penn. She does not fall for him. They are both cadets and try to show off by displaying their talent. Jack has always been unlucky in love—but Karen's beauty and her skill overwhelm him. His awkwardness is nowhere better evidenced than in his relationship with Karen.

When Karen volunteers to become a Sentinel, Jack follows. He is torn between his hatred for the Robotech Masters—those he feels are responsible for the death of his parents—and his desire for Karen. He sees the Sentinels as a means to an end. He is still not impressed with authority and sees the fellowship of the Sentinels as a means of eliminating the protocol of rank and military procedure. For Jack the Sentinels are a way to get revenge and also fulfill his development into manhood. It is the most important decision of his life.

Jack has made one serious enemy on board the SDF-3—Col. B. D. Edwards. Edwards is evil and Jack recognizes that fact from the very first time they meet. Edwards also recognizes in Jack a quality which could adversely affect his plans of power and conquest. Edwards does all in his power to keep Jack from getting promotions. He is glad when Jack volunteers to become a Sentinel. It is one less thing that will worry Edwards.

On the Sentinels' return, Jack and Edwards have a serious and dramatic confrontation.

KAREN PENN

age: 15
military rank: airman cadet
sex: female

Karen Penn is a beautiful young cadet selected to work onboard the SDF-3 at the request of Dr. Penn, Karen's father who is associated with Dr. Lang's research group. Karen has had a difficult childhood. Her mother, a famed concert violinist, was killed during the First Robotech War and her father spent most of his time working to develop new forms of Robotechnology while trying to solve the riddle of protoculture. She is a very educated young woman who turned to the military as a way to impress her father and build back their weak familial relationship.

An alternative motive also compelled her to become a member of the Robotech Defense Force—her love for action and adventure. Now that there was a relative sense of peace on their home planet, life on Earth would be boring to Karen. She looked forward to the unknown and the excitement of engaging an enemy thought to be a powerful force in the universe.

Jack Baker and Karen Penn.

Her superior attitude causes her to get into many small fights with her fellow female cadets. She is not popular with the women onboard the ship—but her beauty makes her attractive to most of the men. Unfortunately for the men who try to date Karen, she also finds them inadequate.

Lisa Hayes Hunter takes Karen under her wing because she recognizes in her a certain quality which could allow Karen to become a powerful leader in the future.

One of the most persistent suitors Karen has to deal with is Jack Baker. Jack is everything Karen finds offensive about the "male animal"—he is aggressive, sure of himself and never takes no for an answer. Jack is also her rival in terms of military promotion. They are always competing with one another. Their life onboard the SDF-3 and later as part of the Sentinel team is a constant courtship ritual.

Lisa thinks that Jack's friendship would go a long way to improve Karen's personality but is unable to convince the young woman of the positive influence of a romantic involvement. Lisa keeps trying to tell Karen that one cannot live for duty alone. Karen tries not to listen. She continues to practice her skills in martial arts and as a pilot of the Veritech Hover Tank.

Karen's idol onboard the SDF-3 is Miriya Sterling. She sees in Miriya all the qualities which she aspires to. Her marriage to Max Sterling is, according to Karen, a necessary evil considering her alien roots. The decision by Miriya to leave her child on the Earth while they go to battle is proof that she is warrior first and woman last—Karen is mistaken and eventually learns a valuable lesson.

JOHNATHAN WOLFE

age: 33 rank: Colonel in Robotech Defense Force, becomes leader of infantry division of Robotech Expeditionary Force.
sex: male

Johnathan Wolfe is a hero of the caliber of Rick Hunter and Max Sterling. He came up through the ranks during the First Robotech War. He was personally selected by Rick Hunter to head up the infantry division of the R.E.F. Johnathan Wolfe is a handsome and outgoing character. He is always chased by women. But he tries to maintain a cool exterior by dating many girls. He is not looking for a lasting relationship.

His life changes when he rescues Minmei and Janice during a battle with the Invid near the moon of Fantoma. He had noticed Minmei during Rick and Lisa's wedding and was impressed by her beauty and talent. After he rescues her, he is infatuated with her—almost to the point of obsession. He thinks of nothing else but Minmei. It affects his judgment as a warrior.

Eventually on the homeworld of the Robotech Masters, where the R.E.F. have set up a temporary encampment, Johnathan Wolfe proposes marriage to Minmei. She is overwhelmed by the successful marriage of Max and Miriya and the recent marriage of Rick and Lisa—an event in which she caught the bouquet—an indication that she is next in line for marriage. She accepts. But the mission of the Sentinels gets in the way.

Johnathan is compelled to join the group. He tells Minmei that it is his duty to accompany his friends on the mission. He urges her to join him. She refuses—telling him that she is not a soldier. She feels that she can be more help with the R.E.F. stationed on the moon of Fantoma while they construct new hyperspace warp drives to allow the Robotech Armada the ability to transport themselves back to Earth.

Wolfe accepts her decision. He devotes himself to the cause of the Sentinels—bringing the glory of his Wolfe Pack to even greater heights in the fight against the Invid.

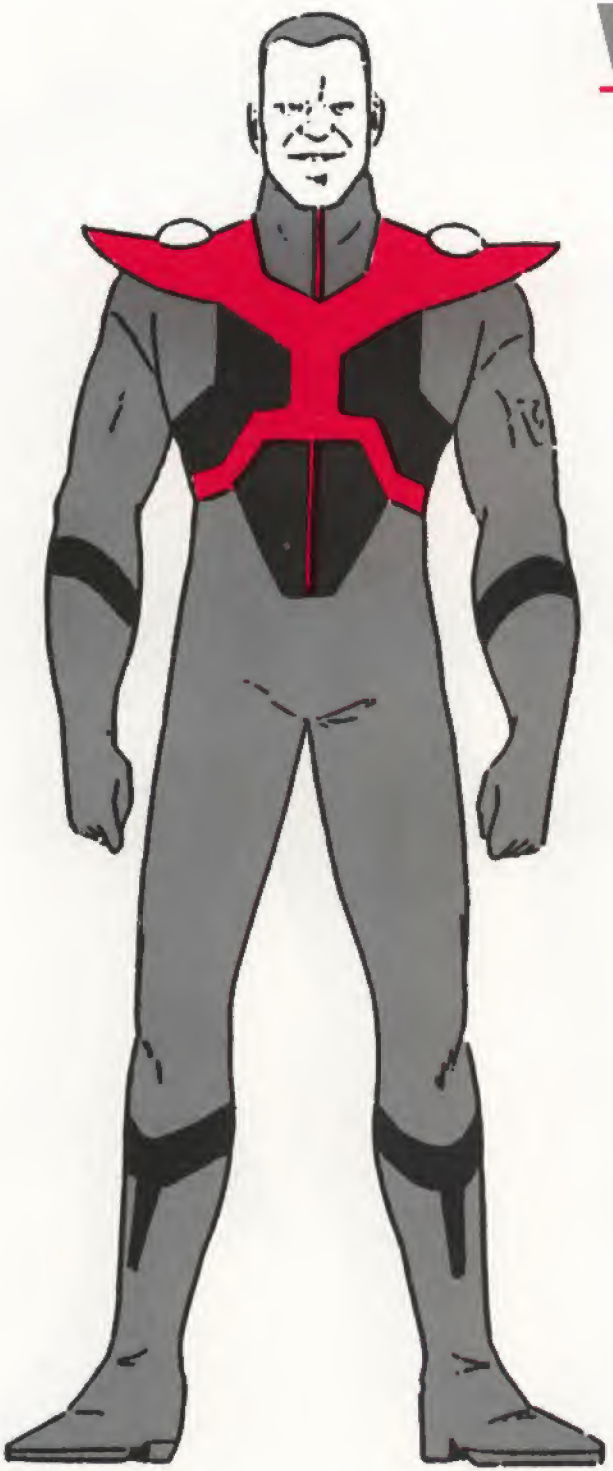
Eventually, at his reunion with Minmei, he learns that she has broken off the engagement. This rips the soul of this hero, who volunteers to head a recon mission to return to the Earth and investigate the Invid threat there.

JEAN GRANT

age: 25
rank: Captain—Medical Doctor on SDF-3
sex: female

Jean Grant is a scientist and doctor of great importance. Her marriage to Vince Grant is important to the Robotech saga. They had a child—Bowie, who later with Dana Sterling (the daughter of Max and Miriya) are important players in the Second Robotech War fought on the Earth when the Robotech Masters arrive to reclaim their lost protoculture factory before the Invid discover its location.

Jean Grant is a close friend to Miriya and Lisa. She is an intelligent woman who shows that she can handle the tough position of field doctor in combat.



VINCE GRANT

age: 25
rank: Lt. Commander—pilot of the Groundbased Mobile Unit (GMU)
sex: male

Vince Grant is a powerful human. His large frame and muscular physique intimidate most people he meets. And yet his size belies his gentleness and compassion. He is a brave soldier, but also he is an engineer. He is responsible for the design of many of the transport vehicles in the R.E.F. His pride and joy is the Groundbased Mobile Unit (also known as the G.M.U.). It is a multi-functional research base which can transform into an awesome weapons system.

Vince is the younger brother of Claudia Grant, a hero of the First Robotech War who was killed during the final battle of that conflict. Vince, a successful engineer, felt compelled to join the R.D.F. and carry on the tradition of his sister and his family honor. While he is a cadet in the RDF he meets his wife-to-be, Jean. They are perfectly suited to one another. Where Vince is strong and powerful, Jean is petite and intelligent. Jean is a medical doctor who becomes a key member of the Robotech Expeditionary Force and later the Sentinels.

Vince is one of Rick Hunter's close friends. They share an enmity due to Claudia Grant—one of Rick's friends on the SDF-1.

BREETAI

age: not determined at this time
rank: Field Commander of Robotech Expeditionary Force (previously held similar rank in Zentraedi Armada)
sex: a biogenetically engineered life form exhibiting masculine traits.

Breetai was an important figure in the First Robotech War. Initially a Zentraedi Field Commander, this 60-foot giant commanded the mission to track down the SDF-1.

After several years of continued fighting against the Robotech Defense Force under the command of Henry Gloval (now deceased), Breetai began to understand the ways of the humans. Along with his advisor, Exedore, Breetai embraced the cause of the Robotech Defense Force. He was instrumental in obtaining the valuable Robotech Master's Robotech Factory. It is in this factory which falls under Breetai's command that most of the new Robotech Mecha is built and designed.

When the idea to travel to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters is brought up, Breetai and Exedore are among the first to volunteer. They both realize the importance of a negotiated peace as opposed to the continuation of pointless warfare.

But, in order to become a member of the R.E.F., Breetai must first be micronized (compressed atomically to normal human size—which for him is close to 7 feet tall).

Later Breetai becomes an important member of the fellowship of heroes known as the Sentinels. He is a fearless combat leader, and his many years experience in leading one wing of the Zentraedi Armada comes in handy as the Sentinels engage in a continuous duel of wits with the Invid and the Inorganics.

Eventually Breetai must sacrifice himself in order for the mission to survive. It is Breetai who engages the Regent in a one-on-one battle. Neither is victorious. Breetai wins the fight but is mortally wounded. This occurs in the final battle staged during act II.

Breetai is a good-natured professional. He puts his full emotional force into everything he does. It is in this way that Breetai has gained the respect of the Robotech Expeditionary Force, the survivors on the homeworld of the Robotech Masters and his fellow Sentinels.

EXEDORE

age: not determined at this time—but he appears to be old and wise.
rank: Ambassador from the United Earth Government assigned to the Robotech Expeditionary Force. (previously Exedore was an advisor to Breetai and a keeper of knowledge for the Zentraedi society)
sex: a biogenetically engineered life form with definite masculine traits.

Exedore is an oddity among the giant Zentraedi cloned and programmed by the Robotech Masters to serve as the military arm of their expanding empire. Originally, the Zentraedi were created to mine ore in the harsh conditions found on Fantoma, the planet which the Robotech Masters homeworld orbits as one of several moons. But when the Robotech Masters realized that they would have to defend their holding against the Invid and anyone else who lusted for power or the secrets of protoculture, the Zentraedi were reprogrammed into a warrior society. The Robotech Masters were so complete in their programming that they actually gave the Zentraedi a "mock history."

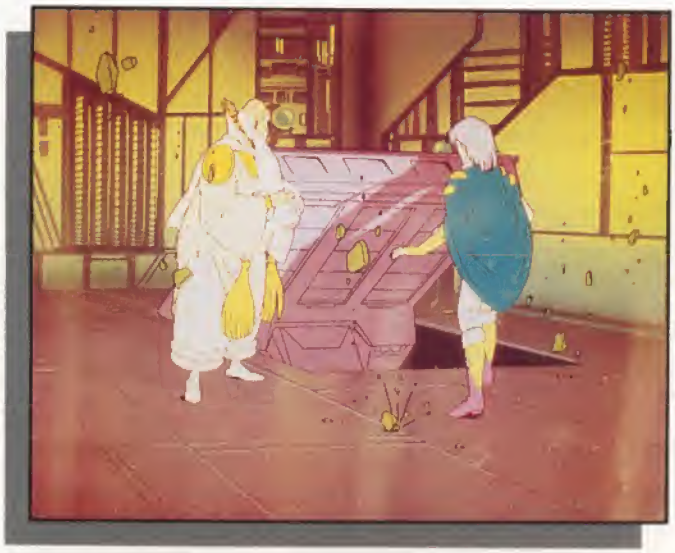
Exedore was the keeper of this mock history. The reason of this unusual role was the fact that Exedore was the first experiment in biogenetic engineering for the Zentraedi. His experiment was not successful and he came out with a slight deformity. This deformity (a twisted back and "dwarfish" size in relation to the other Zentraedi) forced him out of the warrior classification. The Robotech Masters needed someone like Exedore to be the lawsayer of the Zentraedi clan. They took advantage of this misfortune and transformed Exedore into a living encyclopedia of esoteric knowledge.

Exedore was one of the main advisors during the First Robotech War between the Earth and the Zentraedi. Eventually Exedore joined with Breetai in a total rejection of the goals and ideals of the Zentraedi and their rulers, the Robotech Masters.

Allying himself with the humans, Exedore became an important character in the development of Robotechnology and interstellar diplomacy. He is closely associated with Dr. Lang. His knowledge of the customs and habits of the Robotech Masters and their enemies and neighbors is relied on as he becomes associated with the Sentinels and their mission to defeat the Invid.

REM

age: not applicable due to his origin as a clone
rank: apprentice scientist studying under Cabell's teaching
sex: male
special significance: Unknown to Rem for most of the series is the fact that he is the only living clone of Zor capable of reinventing protoculture. This secret is revealed at the end of act II of *The Sentinels* as Cabell, his mentor and friend, dies in his arms.



Rem and Cabell in lab on Tirol.

Rem is a youthful and energetic young scientist. He is a student of Cabell. He understands Cabell—apparently he is the only member of his "clan" who has any faith in the ability of Cabell to unravel the mystery of robotechnology. He assists Cabell in maintaining Zor's library and scientific papers. He also is the caretaker for the "Cha-Cha"—strange little animals which Zor brought back as pets from Optera—the planet on which the Invid Flower of Life was discovered (the Invid Flower of Life is the basis of protoculture and robotechnology).

Rem is a brave fighter and defends his homeworld against the attacks by the Invid and the occupying force of Inorganics. Rem ultimately joins the Sentinels in an effort to track down the Invid and stop them before they are able to enact their plans for universal conquest. He becomes a close friend to Lisa Hayes Hunter and Janice. He is not aware of her dual identity—Janice is actually a robot intended to be used as a spy by Dr. Lang which projects a holographic image around her metallic body to give the illusion of real flesh and blood—no one knows of Janice's secret—not even Janice until Dr. Lang feels that the time is right to use this android to help save the mission of the Sentinels and the Robotech Expeditionary Force.

Rem must ultimately make a supreme sacrifice to protect the secrets of robotechnology. He plans to travel through time with Janice to the beginning of the Universe and redistribute the Invid Flower of Life to all inhabited planets. He is not aware that his idea will ultimately destroy the Universe by changing history. His plan ultimately fails.

DR. EMIL LANG

age: 50
rank: Leader of the Robotech Expeditionary Forces (non-military)
sex: male

Dr. Lang was one of the original architects of Earth's Robotech Research Group. He has been involved with the alien technology which accidentally fell to Earth in 1999 from the outset. He was the senior officer onboard the SDF-1. It was directly through his efforts that the Earth's knowledge of the science of Robotechnology was developed.

Following the First Robotech War when it was decided that an expedition would be launched to the homeworld of the Robotech Masters to try and defuse the potential for continued fighting, Dr. Lang was unanimously elected to head the mission. He is a very knowledgeable scientist, having studied biology, chemistry, cosmology, physics, and other various fields. He is extremely popular with the members of the Robotech Expeditionary Force. These brave warriors and scientists consider him a father-figure. They come to him for advice.

Lang recognizes that the key to success as a "diplomat" is in the ability to compromise and to draw upon the strength of others. It is a skill that he uses often.

Dr. Lang is also a romantic. He is an avid reader, who enjoys fantasy and science fiction. He often comments that the adventures that he has participated in far exceed the imagination of many of the books he has read.

Having been involved with Robotechnology for so many years, Dr. Lang is now trying to romanticize the physical appearance of many of the transport vehicles he creates or supervises. One of his most beautiful creations is a mechanical horse which is ridden by officers in the Robotech Expeditionary Force during ceremonial parades and affairs of state. The mechanical horse has a functional winged module which is used by pilots as an observation and recon vehicle.

Dr. Lang tries to maintain information by maintaining an android named Janice as a spy. Impersonating a singing star (one half of a duet featuring Lynn Minmei), Janice reports directly to Dr. Lang. Dr. Lang is the only person onboard the SDF-3 who knows of Janice's alter-ego.

Dr. Lang also is good friends with Breetai and Exedore, two warriors who were employed by the Robotech Masters and who have now joined with the Robotech Defenders to try and bring peace to the universe.

Dr. Lang is a slight man. He may not have great physical strength, but he possesses great courage.

LYNN MINMEI

age: 28
rank/occupation: Celebrity turned airman cadet
sex: female
special characteristics: famous singer

Lynn Minmei was an important player during the First Robotech War. She was crowned beauty queen and later became a famous film actress and singing star. Her unflagging spirit eventually infected that of the original Robotech Defense Force stationed on the SDF-1 and inspired them to victory in the face of overwhelming odds.

During the reconstruction phase following the last major battle of the First Robotech War, Minmei tried to fit the pieces of her personal life back together. She tried to rekindle a relationship she once had with Rick Hunter. But Rick's new responsibilities were too compelling. He could no longer be subject to the infatuation that he once felt for this beautiful and talented star. He could appreciate her as a friend—but he was not willing to give up his life as a military leader for a life of vacant wishful thinking. This rejection was very difficult for Minmei. She had been spoiled due to her celebrity status and was not used to having people say "No!" to her.

She eventually accepted the fact that Rick had fallen in love with Lisa Hayes. She tried to do her best to remain friendly with Rick and his new wife.

It is now several years since she was a major celebrity and Minmei must perform as part of a duet with a mysterious singer calling herself Janice. The two sing well together and seem to get along as sisters.

A mistake brings Minmei and Janice into the adventure experienced by the Robotech Expeditionary Forces. Minmei is rescued by Col. Johnathan Wolfe. At first Minmei mistakes her gratitude for true love and accepts Johnathan's offer of marriage. She wants to have a loving relationship such as she has witnessed with Max and Miriya Sterling and now with Rick and Lisa.

She has come to realize that she is not getting any younger. She is very aware of the fact that she is aging and may lose her beauty—Janice's lack of aging is a constant frustration to her.

Her courtship with Johnathan Wolfe is stormy and it brings home the fact that Minmei does not have the personality to join with another in marriage. No one seems to understand her. She is only happy when she sings. But as a member of the crew of the SDF-3 there is not much room for singing. The civilian quarters have been gutted to make room for the armada which is housed inside the huge ship.

Minmei seems to live in the past, focusing on memories.

B. D. EDWARDS

age: 45
rank: Colonel—a high ranking officer in the Robotech Expeditionary Force.
sex: male
special characteristic: wears a mask to cover hideous scar caused during battle to control Robotech Defense Force in 2010.

B. D. Edwards was a famous soldier in the civil war which was fought on the Earth prior to the First Robotech War. His arch enemy was Roy Fokker, Rick Hunter's closest friend and teacher. Edwards went into hiding following the return of the SDF-1 during the early stages of the First Robotech War. The records of his criminal treachery were wiped out in the major battle between the Zentraedi Armada led by Dolza. Edwards took the opportunity to return to the ranks of the Robotech Defense Force.

The Mission of the Robotech Expeditionary Force seemed like a perfect opportunity for Edwards to get revenge on his old enemy's closest friend—Rick Hunter. It was also an excellent method for Edwards to try and usurp the command of the R.E.F. and attempt to return to the Earth as a conqueror.

He is given command of the Robotech Expeditionary Forces when Rick Hunter and a select group of humans join with the Sentinels to track down the Invid Regent before he is able to find the secret orchards of the Invid Flower of Life planted by Zor, a Robotech Masters' scientist who discovered the secret of protoculture and with it robotechnology.

Edwards uses this opportunity to construct a massive armada—all part of a plan to return to the Earth as a new invader. He sends back several scout ships to check on the Earth's progress and to make sure that the Invid have not found their way to his homeworld—thus spoiling his chances for planetary conquest.

Edwards is totally evil—he is one of the most treacherous humans to be seen in the *Robotech* saga. He is bitter because of his deformity and tries to hide behind his mask and dream of power. He has an excellent military mind and is good at planning operations. He likes to give orders and not take them. He has a very superior attitude and trusts no one. Eventually he gets control of a group of lifeless mercenaries called the Inorganics—which sets the stage for a major battle between the Sentinels and Edwards' troops on the moon of Fantoma—the homeworld of the Robotech Masters.

CABELL

age: 379 (not actually very old for a Robotech Master)
rank/title: Scientist and Sexton of Zor's library.
sex: male

Cabell is the only contemporary of the original Zor who has remained on the moon of Fantoma—the homeworld of the "Robotech Masters." He has volunteered to do so because of his belief that he is on the verge of discovering the secrets of protoculture and robotechnology from his study of Zor's notes. The rest of the Robotech Masters and Robotech Elders think that Cabell is an eccentric old fool who is better off back on the moon of Fantoma than with the main body as they journey to the Earth to recover their lost protoculture factory—the SDF-1 which their warriors, the Zentraedi, failed to recapture. If by some miracle the experiments of Cabell do come to some conclusions then the Robotech Elders have lost nothing and gained the knowledge through Cabell's efforts—but they really do not believe in him.

Rem and Cabell.

Cabell is much like Merlin—his science is presented more like magic or alchemy than high-technology. For this reason he is not popular among the remaining civilization on the moon of Fantoma. His only friend is Rem. Rem is his student. Rem has a mysterious past which is not explained. But Rem is a great help to Cabell. Rem acts as Cabell's protector—helping the aging scientist during battles and when he falls ill.

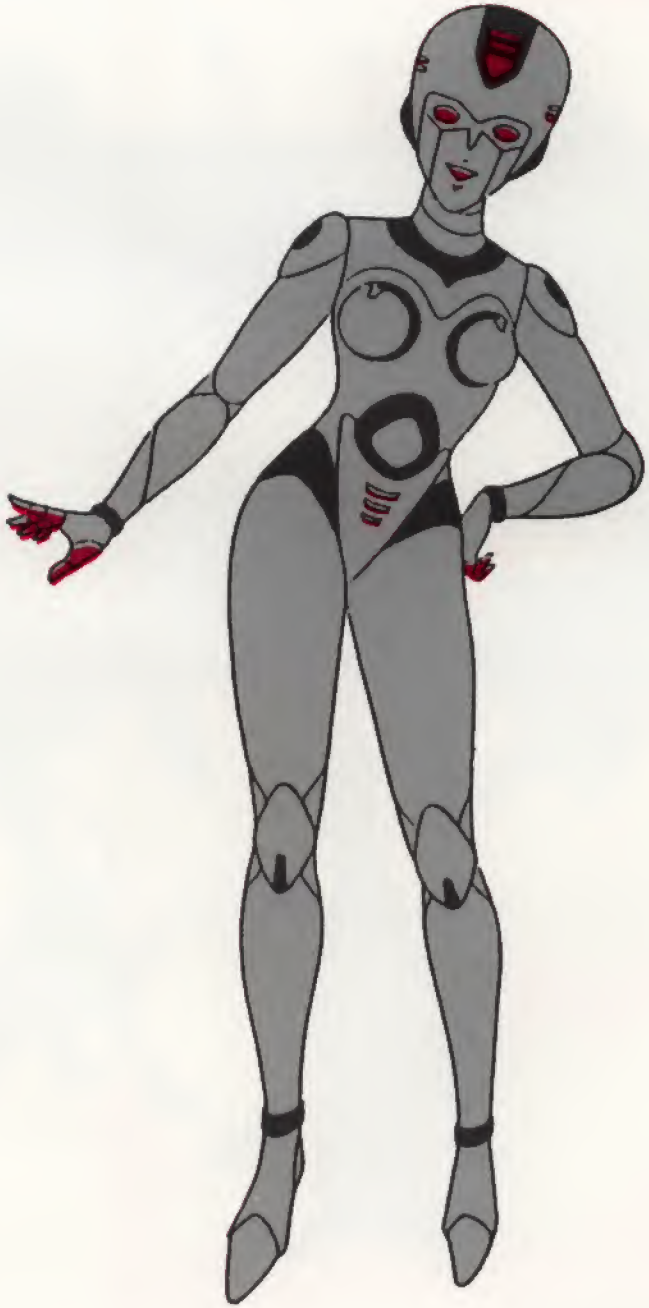
Following the appearance of the Invid and the Inorganics on the moon of Fantoma, Cabell begins to piece together the true intent of the Invid and the Robotech Elders. The entire Robotech concept has been shrouded in mystery from the very beginning by the Robotech Elders for fear that they would lose control of this powerful energy source.

Cabell is quick to understand the importance of the Sentinels. He offers his services to the group on their journey to defeat the Invid.

He joins with Dr. Lang and Exedore in becoming the fountain of knowledge which guides the Sentinels through their perilous journey. They all prefer to plan strategy and invent new devices rather than actually join into any combat.

Cabell knows the secret of Rem, that he is the only clone of Zor capable of reinventing protoculture.

JANICE



age: not applicable
military rank: not applicable
sex: not applicable (but has assumed female personality)
special characteristics: android (sexy robot) that uses holographic technology to project a human appearance onto her metallic body. Has the ability, through computer programming to change facial appearance and other characteristics. When not wearing human "body mask" the android is a gleaming sleek robot with many LED display, windows as eyes, mouth, ears, and on fingertips.

Janice is the reconstructed, ambulatory remnant of an artificial intelligence brought to Earth inside the SDF-1. Originally used by the United Earth Government to control the Robotech Defense Force and provide a conduit of propaganda for controlling the civilian population, Janice has been converted into a three-dimensional object by Dr. Lang.

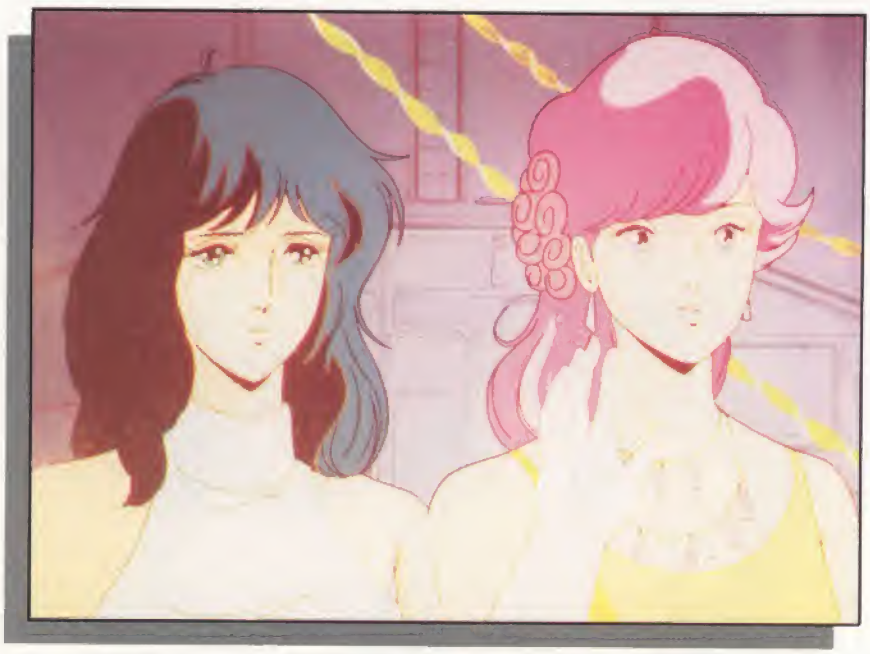
Janice's original role was to be the singing partner of Lynn Minmei. In this guise, the android would be able to move freely in the civilian sector of the newly reconstructed cities of the planet Earth to gather information for Dr. Lang who is suspicious of various military and political leaders who will be in charge of the planet while he heads the Robotech Expeditionary Force into space and a proposed confrontation with the Robotech Masters.

However, things do not turn out as planned. Janice finds herself lost in space when Lynn Minmei's small fan jet gets caught in the hyperspace warp vortex of the SDF-3's jump into an inter-dimensional "wormhole."

The only person who knows her true identity as a robot is Dr. Lang, who uses this opportunity to have an ally on board the SDF-3. Janice becomes an expert soldier. She masters all forms of weapon systems and personal combat techniques under the expert teaching of Col. Johnathan Wolfe and Max Sterling.

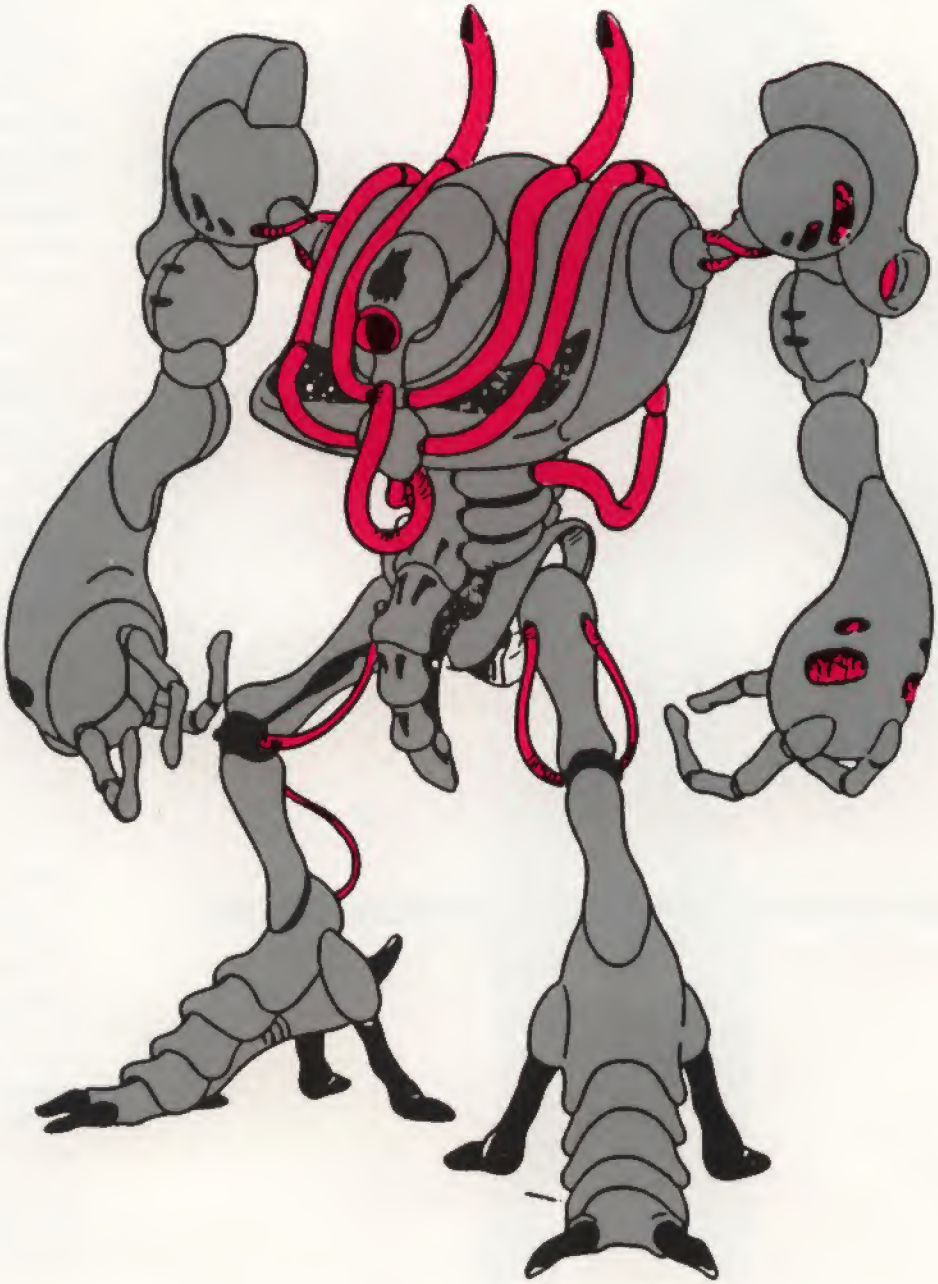
When the time arises to create the Sentinel team from the Robotech Expeditionary Forces, Dr. Lang nominates Janice. There are still many doubts in Lang's mind about the true nature of the Sentinels and with Janice in their midst, he feels more secure in allowing Rick Hunter and his friends join in the important search for the Invid horde.

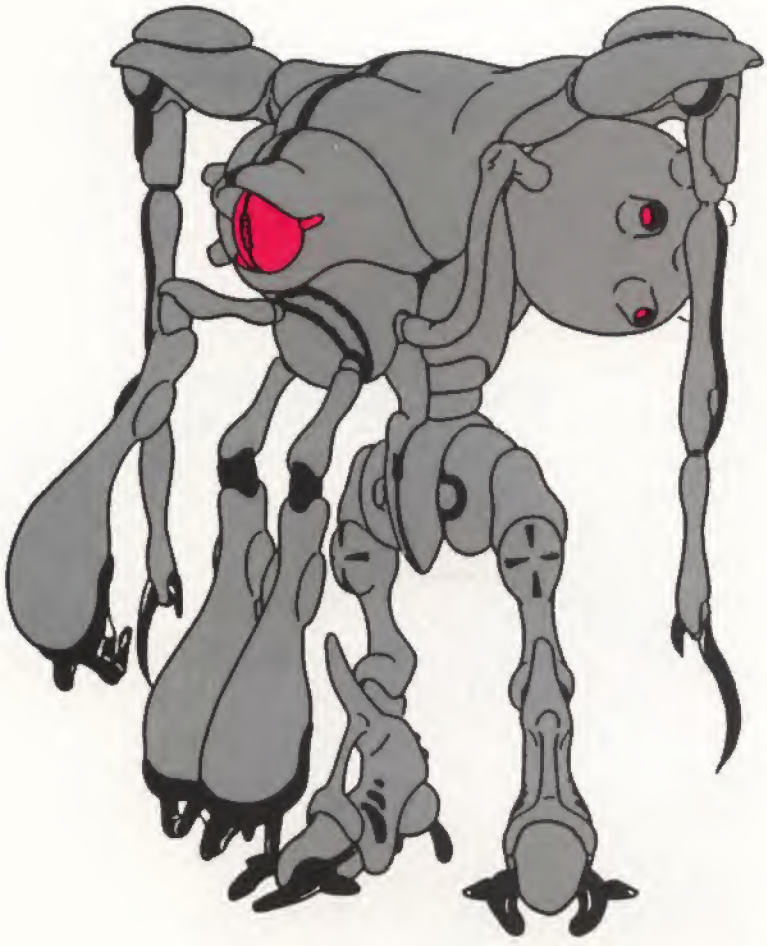
Throughout all of this intrigue, Janice maintains her friendship with Minmei and tries to keep her friend busy in an environment without the civilian amenities which were found in the original space voyage of the SDF-1—a voyage which Lynn Minmei took that helped to build her career as a popular celebrity of the Earth.

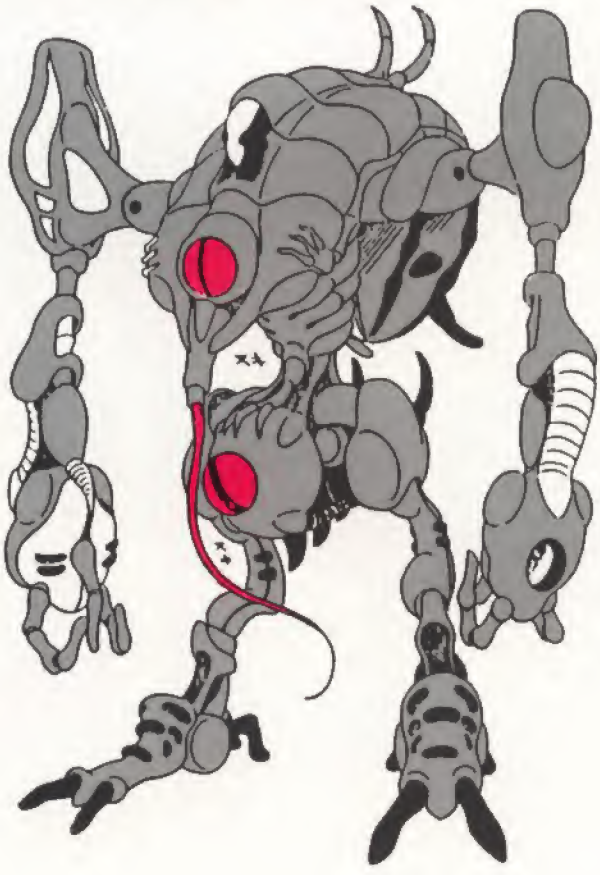


Lynn Minmei and Janice.

THE INORGANICS







age: not applicable (non-living character)
rank: two ranks (officer & drone) in three basic design groups

The Inorganics are the only true "robot" created by the Invid to serve as an occupation army and police force assigned to the worlds which the Invid have conquered. They are killing machines. They come in three designs—the Crann, the Scrim and the Odeon. These designs come in two standard sizes—three meters for the drones and five meters for the officers.

The Crann and the Scrim are the most numerous. They have simple mechanisms and are assigned to simple tasks. They are the basic Inorganics used by the Invid. The Odeon is a showpiece of Invid technology. It is a multifunction, multi-task oriented Inorganic. It also doubles as an exo-skeleton for Invid who must deal with work that requires delicate manipulation of small keyboards or knobs, etc. The Odeon only comes in one size—five meters.

There is a fourth Inorganic known as the Cougar. It is designed to look like a four-legged beast. Its function is to act as a "bloodhound" for the Invid and the Inorganics. It is extremely powerful—two meters tall.

The Inorganics are hollow shells.

THE INVID

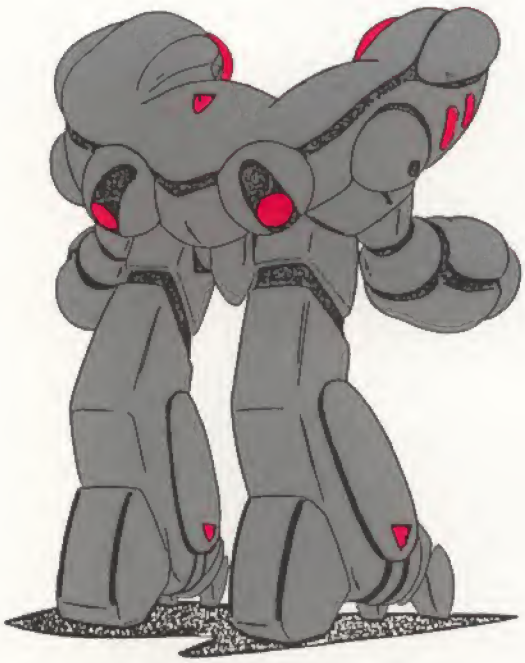
age: immortal (ageless)
rank: full rank from hatchling to ruler (Regent & Regiss)
sex: asexual creatures who can take on the attributes of either sex as necessary.

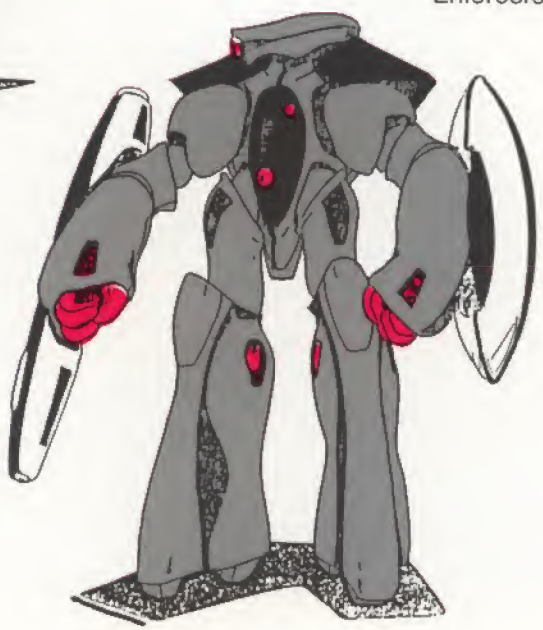
Invid Shocktrooper.

The Invid are protoplasmic creatures who begin life as a slimy, gelatinous mass which is housed in a crystal egg. As the Invid evolves, it ultimately takes on a mockery of human form—a creature walking upright on two legs. The flesh is still slimy and hangs off the skeleton—appearing like a flabby deflated balloon. The Invid is green. The ultimate evolution of the Invid has formed two supreme rulers, the Regiss and the Regent (they are the yin and yang of the Invid clan).

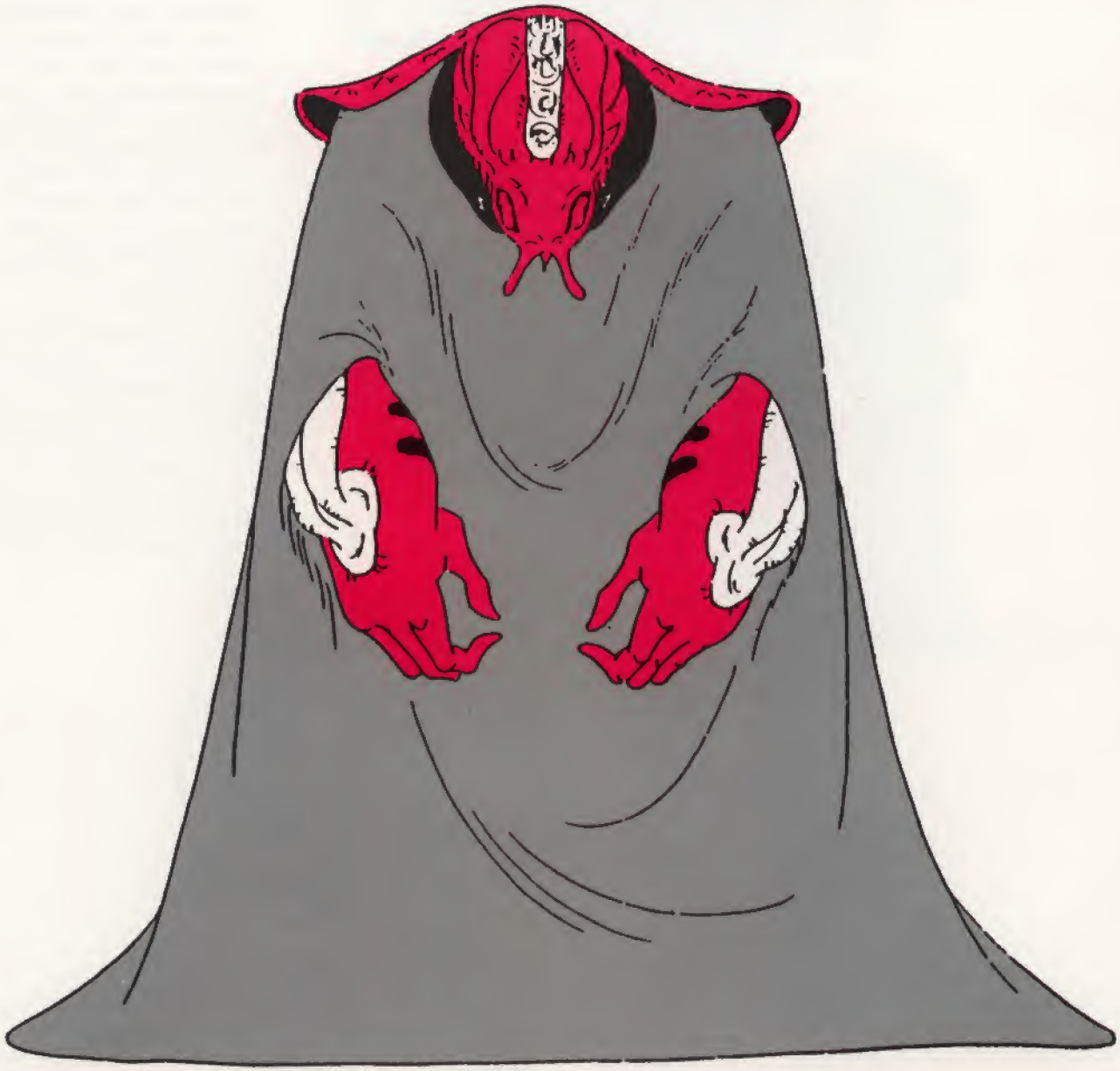
The Invid are nonscientific. All their technology comes from tapping into a stream of cosmic consciousness after ingesting a powerful fruit from a plant known as the Invid Flower of Life.

The protoplasmic Invid use several weapons systems—Basic Armor is called Invid Scout; basic soldier unit—Invid Shocktrooper; armored soldier—Invid Armored Shocktrooper; and the most powerful Invid mecha, Invid Officers Unit. Evolved Invid function in body armor and are called Invid Enforcers.





THE REGENT



age: not determined at this time—probably immortal
rank/title: Leader of the Invid horde
sex: asexual but has outward male appearance

The Regent is the ultimate force of evil in the universe. Originally a complacent leader of the Invid tribe, the lack of protoculture from the fruit of the Invid Flower of Life has turned this Invid into a progressively evil character. Now the Regent is obsessed with destroying the civilization of the Robotech Masters who stole their precious plant, and engaging on a plan for universal conquest.

The Regent is an evolved Invid. His body is a crude approximation of the human form. Only his corpulence and evil personality come through his flabby lizardlike flesh. The Regent rules over his subjects like the leader of an insect colony. By ingesting the fruit of the Flower of Life, the Invid get inspiration. They are a non-scientific culture and all of their technological devices are derived from the dreamstate induced by the power of the Flower of Life.

The Regent considers the Invid to be his children. He does not like leaving any of his family behind. That is why he has created the Inorganics—killing machines which are used to police the worlds which the Invid have conquered. These Inorganics are controlled by a living computer which is distinguished by having a direct link to the Regent's own consciousness.

The goals of the Regent are in direct conflict with that of the Regiss—his female counterpart (the yin to his yang). The true strength of the Invid is split when the Regiss takes her half of the Invid horde on a journey to discover the source of protoculture which they believe to be on the planet where Zor sent the SDF-1 before he died. The Regiss prefers to have the freedom to search for the ultimate destiny of the Invid while the Regent is obsessed with creating his own destiny through conquest and warfare. It is this diametrically opposite view of evolution versus conquest which divides the Invid and ultimately leads to their defeat.

Invid Regiss.

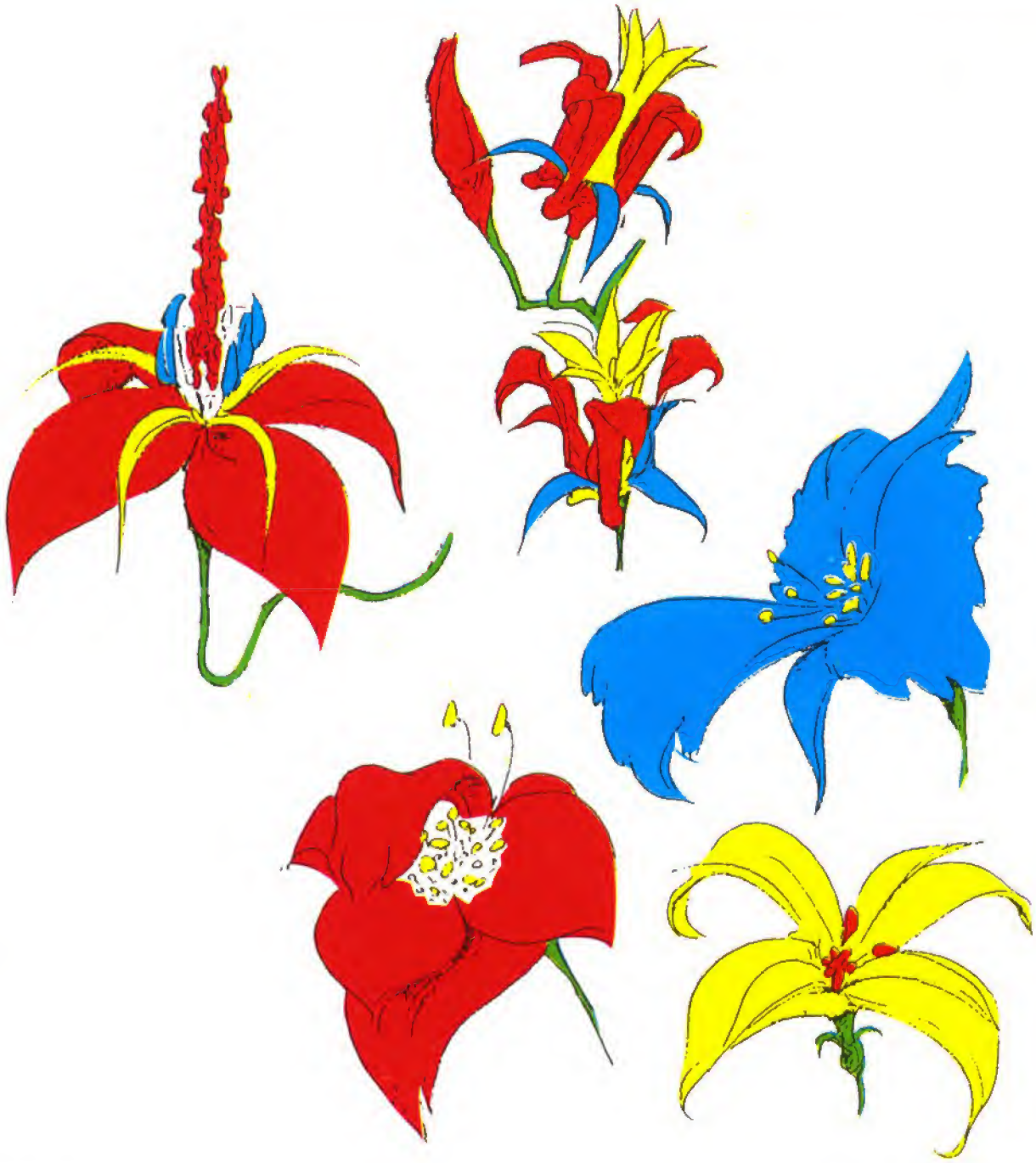
Invid Regent.

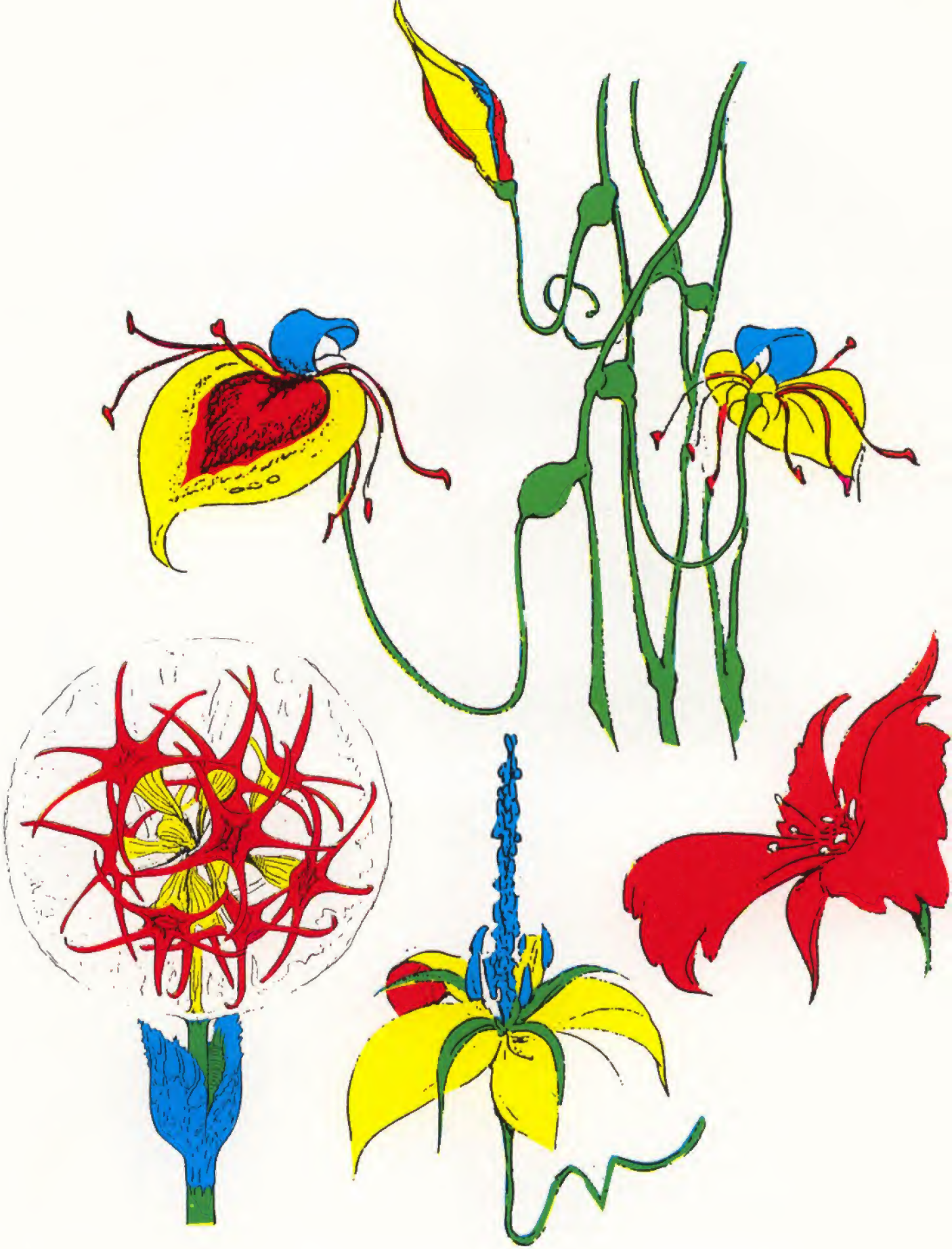
Regent torturing citizen of Tirol.

Invid Regent.

Invid Regiss.

THE FLOWER OF LIFE



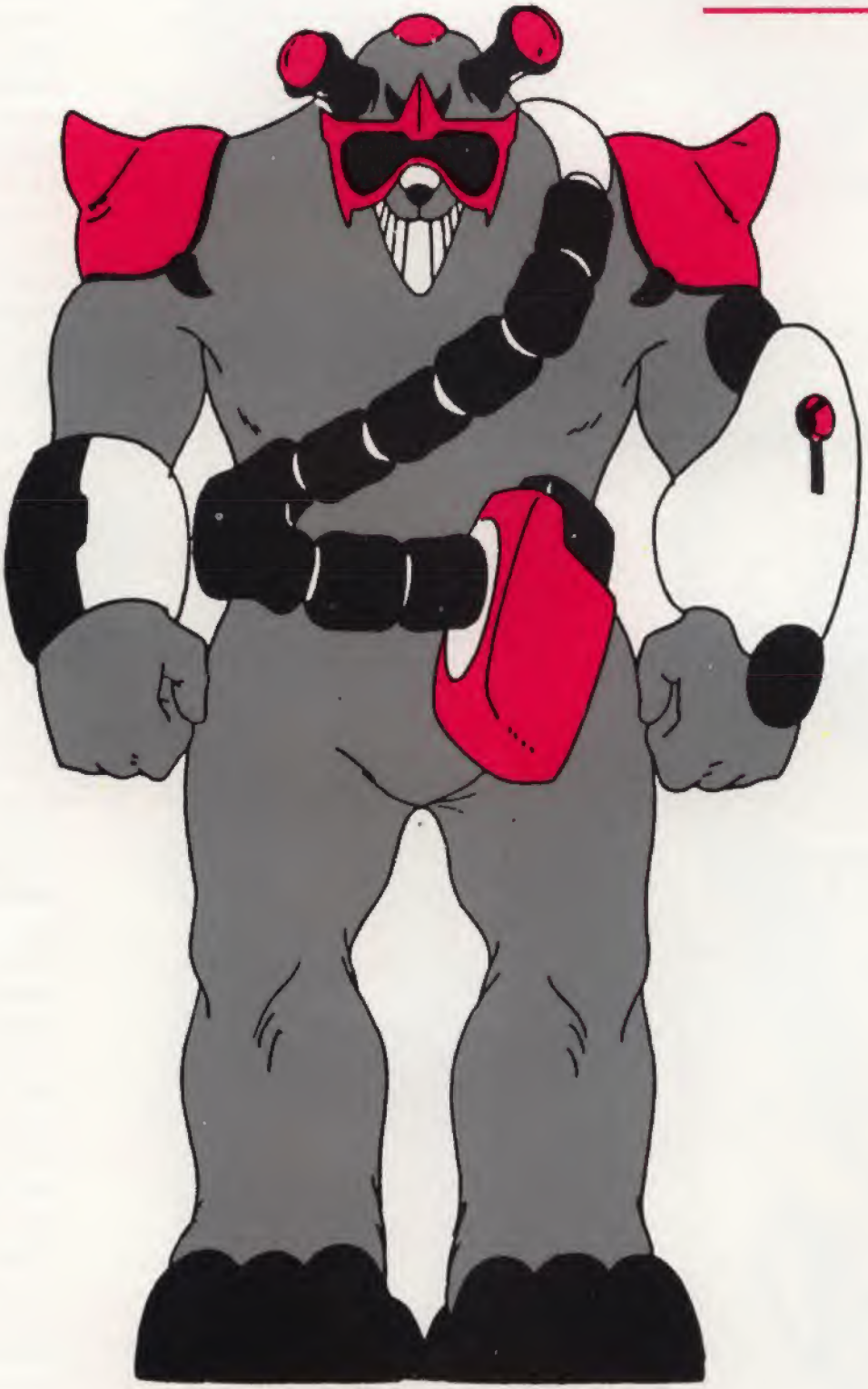


The Flower of Life is a unique plant which was native to the planet Optera—the homeworld of the Invid. It is the most important item in the food chain of the Invid—The fruit from the Flower of Life is the only food which can give strength to the Invid. But the Flower of Life's importance goes beyond the obvious. It not only serves as physical nourishment for the Invid—it also serves as a means of physic enlightenment. Eating the fruit of the Flower of Life becomes a religious experience for the Invid. It is a plant with mystical powers and the more fruit which is consumed, the more enlightened or evolved an Invid can become. The Invid do not need to constantly eat this food for life support—the Invid can live with little food—most of their nourishment comes from living most of their life in a solution made from the actual plant material of matured specimens of the Flower of Life. Once the plant is not able to bear fruit, the plant is mashed up and distilled into a liquid which the Invid bathe and travel in. The Fruit of the Flower of Life is poisonous to all but the Invid. The plants are germinated by pollinators known as either Cha-Cha or "the children of Zor," small creatures which are also native to Optera.

The germinating seeds of the Flower of Life are also the basis of a power source known as protoculture which is the basic energy system of a technology known as Robotechnology. A scientist calling himself Zor discovered the unique property of the Flower of Life on an expedition originating from the only populated moon of the planet Fantoma. Zor's people were a race of techno-voyagers. The lifestyle of these intelligent space voyagers was simply to gather up the technology and resources of surrounding planets and exploit it for their own use. Zor's discovery of "organic fusion" which took place in germinating seeds from the Flower of Life when held in a complex matrix of fluids formed the basis of the protoculture explosion. News of this discovery caused his elders to order the complete defoliation of Optera—the only place in which the Flower of Life could be found. Zor was ordered to gather up all the fruitful plants he could find on Optera and destroy the rest of the plant life on the planet. The Invid who initially welcomed the techno-voyagers were left with nothing. Deprived of the special fruit of the flower of life, the Invid began to degenerate into hollow approximations of their true evolved selves. The only Invid who retained any modest visage of the original grandeur of the Invid society is the Regent. All of the other Invid became grossly mutated. The lifestyle of the Invid changed radically. They turned from a relatively peaceful race to a race of warriors bent on exacting vengeance on those responsible for taking their precious Flower of Life from them (something like how the American Indians must have felt when the territorial expansion destroyed the buffalo and took their land away from them—stretching the analogy somewhat but I'm sure you will get the picture).

Zor also took with him the pollinators. He kept their function a secret from his masters. It was his trump card.

LRON



age: 721 (early middle age for a Carbonarite)
rank: Captain of Sentinels Convoy
sex: male

Planetary History

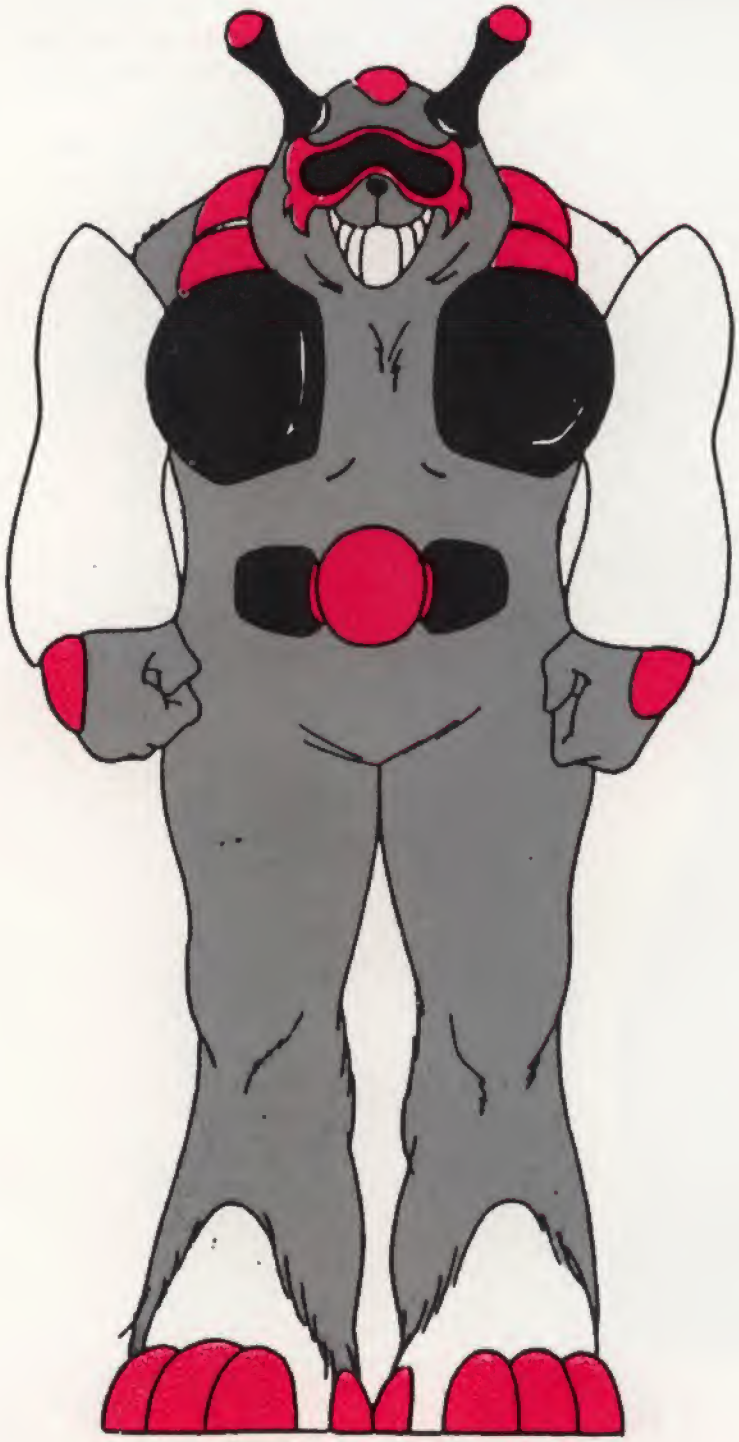
Carbonara is a huge planet which is made up of only one mineral—a reddish ore called Sekitan which is highly combustible. At one time, Carbonara was a very important planet—its virtually unlimited source of fuel was used by many less advanced planets as a prime energy source. Through years of technological evolution, Carbonarite scientists have developed the energy system of Sekitan into a power source as powerful as nuclear energy. The only adverse side-effects from this steam-based energy system are the huge amount of soot and slag that is produced as a by-product and the immense clouds of smoke and steam which result from the energy. It is not a clean energy source. The workers who tend to the engines are like the coal tenders in 19th-century steamships. They are covered in sweat, blackened by soot and dust. They wear goggles to protect their eyes from the smoke. These goggles have become part of the Carbonarites' basic wardrobe. The quality and design of the goggles denote the rank and status of individual Carbonarites.

Eventually Carbonara was left without an economy (neighboring planets discovered clean energy—nuclear power, telekinetic energy, solar power, protoculture, etc.). The general nature of the Carbonarites began to change. Slowly they became isolationist. It wasn't until Zor felt that the slag heaps of Carbonara might prove to be an excellent bedding soil for the Invid Flower of Life, that anyone even took notice of the planet.

Character Profile

Lron was a young worker when Zor first came to his planet. The Carbonarites were so impressed with Zor and his plan to grow a plantation on their planet (there is no native plant life on Carbonara), that they vowed to form an alliance that would consider Zor their savior and look to him in times of trouble. It wasn't until the Invid attacked Carbonara that the alliance was recalled by the elder Carbonarites. However, Lron remembered and had prepared for this day. He organized a band of his bravest friends and formed a group to travel to the moon of Fantoma—the homeworld of Zor—and ask for help.

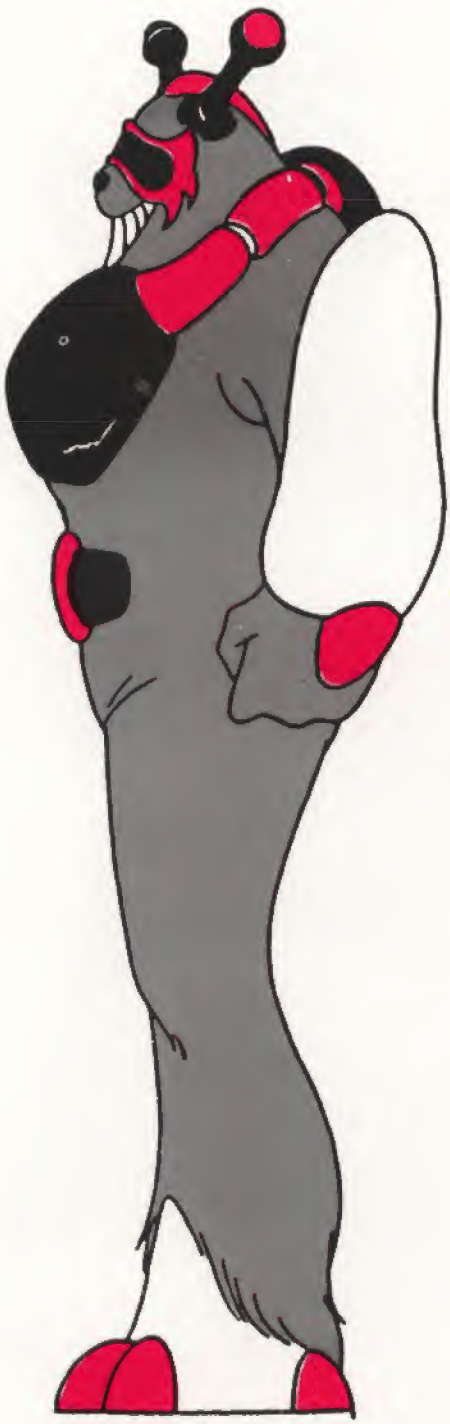
Lron is a strong and powerful hulk of flesh. His body is sinewy and rock hard. His features are obscure, but his body is definitely humanoid. His wife Crysta is constructed in similar manner. Power and strength is the main forte of the Carbonarite.



Rank: Charter member of the Sentinels
Age: 187

Crysta is one of a small number of Carbonarites who manage to escape from an Invid Slave Ship which is carrying a group of aliens to an Invid Zoo on Optera. She is Lron's mate. Lron is much older than Crysta—in fact, Crysta is Lron's third mate. Crysta is a very sympathetic character. Her size belies the fact that she has a very open and giving personality. From the beginning Crysta seems troubled. It is not until later that we discover that Crysta is worried for the safety of an entire generation of young Carbonarites held prisoner on Carbonara in order to force the highly advanced "steam engineers" to work for the Inivd. The Carbonarites are regarded as hard workers, and Crysta is no exception. She is willing to engage in any work which is necessary to complete an assignment.

Once the Carbonarite children are liberated, Crysta becomes a capable warrior. She follows her mate's lead and does most of her fighting on a Carbonarite Hover Cycle. She becomes good friends with Larna and Jean Grant.



BURAK

A mutated Perytonian who becomes a charter member of the Sentinels

Burak has a warped sense of duty. He feels compelled to save his people from an infernal war which has raged for centuries. He is not willing to become part of the group. His sole desire is to save his world and he will sacrifice everything to achieve that end.

He becomes a member of the Sentinels by accident. He was chosen by the Invid as a representative example of a Perytonian mutant. His fellow Perytonians, who were also scheduled to be transported to the Invid Zoo on Optera, were killed in the escape engineered by Lron and Baldan.

PERYTON

Planetary History

Homeworld of Burak.

Peryton is a planet which is rich in nothing. It is a primitive, almost savage planet. It is also a planet with a curse. Thousands of years ago, Peryton was a relatively prosperous planet. A bitter civil war split the population in half. Peryton is a planet of ancient magic and the two rival leaders tore their homeworld apart with spell after spell. Eventually one side was able to survive the savage magical attacks and mustered an army to invade and destroy their rivals. The end was not easy for the rival kings, one hacking the other to death with an enchanted blade. As the losing king lay dying he put a curse on the citizens of Peryton. His curse was that the people of this planet would live out the last day of the battle over and over again. Each day the battle would be played over and over giving people the hope of a new dawn but squashing that dream at sunset. Different events can take place during this new day, but the end results will always be the same. It is a vision of hell which damned the victors to an eternal struggle with no foreseeable escape. The buildings would not be rebuilt on the "new day"; only those who lost lives or suffered wounds would be resurrected or healed.

When Zor chose this planet for experimental seeding, the curse had lasted for nearly 2,000 years. The planet was a shambles. He was unaware of the curse and set up an experimental plantation site on the poor planet. If the experiment was successful Zor expressed hope that the planet would be able to rebuild itself. The social structure of the planet had evolved into two distinct groups, those that were caught in the eternal struggle and those who lived out their lives in a normal manner. Zor only dealt with the "normal" Perytonians. They did not explain the curse—either out of embarrassment or fear that Zor would not leave the experiment on their world.

The environment of Peryton is that of a post-holocaust world. Images of decayed structures which are reminiscent of Brueghel and Bosch. There are mutations which have grown out of the ashes of the arcane warfare which has taken place over the centuries. Peryton is not a pretty place.

The Invid Sensor Nebula discovered Peryton only recently and the Regent has sent a troop of Invid to conquer and Inorganics to police the planet.

TEAL

exhibits female characteristics (but like all Spherians is asexual) Member of the Sentinels.

Teal is the complete opposite of Baldan. Where Baldan is selfless, Teal is selfish; where Baldan is logical, Teal is absent-minded. While Baldan is orderly, Teal is spontaneous. Teal also has a certain narcissism. It is this quality combined with her desire to see other worlds which causes friction between her and Baldan. During combat situations, Teal is quite professional, but her goals and Baldan's are completely opposite.

The homeworld of Baldan and Teal

Spheris is a planet made up of crystal and water—nothing else. The basic sentient life form on this planet is derived from a strain of virus which struck the planet during a meteor shower. Much of the surface of Spheris is pock-marked with meteor craters. The planet is quite old. Through a process of bizarre and complex evolution, the viral strain which flourished on Spheris eventually formed colonies which became the basis for a central nervous system which functioned as a rudimentary brain. Eventually this process evolved individuals who are actually carved out of crystal.

BALDAN

At birth they are multi-faceted, as in a jewel. They are roughly humanoid. They are completely mature at birth, growing out of existing Spherians in much the same way as crystal "grows" during laboratory experiments. Through a selective process, the Spherians feel that it is necessary to sculpt their "bodies" to reflect individual taste and expression. And while some have chosen to express themselves as definite male and female models, the Spherians are asexual. This choice to sculpt their bodies into smooth forms is to distinguish themselves from their craggy surroundings. The viral presence in the crystal allows for the flexibility of an otherwise quite brittle material. All elements of their culture—architecture, weapons, transportation, art, etc.—relate to a sense of design based on the techniques of jewelers. Their world is a multi-faceted wonderland, bathed in an eternal rainbow of light made possible by the use of prisms. The prism is the basis of their weapon systems—the Spherian Laser. Spherians are nourished and healed by light. They begin to get brittle in environments in which light is dim or diffused.

When Zor decided to experiment with Spheris as a potential site to grow the Invid Flower of Life he chose it with the specific idea of creating a massive hydroponic garden, hoping that the quality of light, the presence of the crystal "hothouse" effect and the pureness of the water with crystal sediment would allow the plants to thrive and bear fruit. The plants thrived but were unable to bear fruit. There are no animals which live on the planet other than the Spherians. Therefore there is no way for the spores of the Flowers of Life to pollinate the waiting blossoms. These flowers have virtually taken over part of the planet and turned it into a massive garden of tree-like plants.

The Invid discovered Spheris and conquered it. Their tactics were such that they destroyed much of the inhabited section of the planet. Many of the Spherians literally melted into the surface of the planet to avoid capture or death. The survivors (many were enslaved) turned into farmers for the Invid who waited with great anticipation for the time when these massive plants would bear fruit. There is a token detachment of Invid on the planet, mostly scientists. Most of the detention work is handled by the Inorganics. The Invid have set up Spheris as a "port planet" and a "resort locale."

sex: male
young leader of a tribe of Vulpines from Garuda
Charter member of the Sentinels

Kami is a unique creature exhibiting all of the characteristics of a wild animal coupled with the added depth of personality and individuality which comes from the ability to communicate outside of the boundaries of species or race. As the leader of a tribe of Vulpine grazers, Kami is not a natural hunter—let alone killer. Kami prefers to act as a guide or a scout. By living in a so-called dream state, Kami is able to tap into a cosmic intelligence—a link with infinity or the creator—which gives him perception and intuition following a direct line back to the dawn of creation. Kami is swift and intelligent. Kami is also brave and, in a situation which requires Kami to fight, is able to stand up to the challenge. It is something which he has learned from the cloned bioroid operators which his tribe adopted after the Invid invasion. Kami will use anything as a weapon or for defense. It is his link with nature which allows him to react quickly.

LEARNA

sex: female
Kami's mate
Charter member of the Sentinels

As is customary on Garuda, tribes are led by couples. Kami's mate is Learna. The female Vulpine has the ability to channel the dream-state of the Garudians into a force which she can control as a defense mechanism. The more sophisticated Vulpine women can also use this power as a weapon. When done properly the power of the female Vulpine can affect the "reality" of an adversary. Eye contact must be established. Once this is done, a female Vulpine can make an opponent see virtually anything and make them believe that it is real. The Vulpines draw their strength from their mates. The stronger the male the stronger the female. They do not exist as individuals. They cannot exist as individuals. If a mate dies, the survivor must be removed from the tribe. Mates counteract each other's power. An unbalanced Vulpine is dangerous.

GARUDA

The Homeworld of Kami and Learna

Garuda is a mysterious, misty planet. The major sentient creatures of this world are vulpine, with their fur exhibiting color changes in relationship to the season. The landscape is relatively flat, appearing like a bog or a moor. The land is lush with vegetation. Most of this looks like moss or cypress. The Garudians live on the high ground in camps. The technology of the planet is ancient and unexplained. What little technology they have is written off as gifts from the "gods." There is no totally civilized society on Garuda—no cities, no major population centers. It is basically a primitive world which is the home of the vulpine (or fox-like) Garudians. A characteristic of this planet is the atmosphere which gives all the creatures who live on the world nourishment as well as a sense of euphoria. It is an atmosphere that they must breathe in order to be fed. The effect of this atmosphere allows for the creatures to exist in what the aborigines call "Dream time." There are no natural enemies on Garuda. All the creatures live in an idyllic tranquility—much like Homer's "Land of the Lotus Eaters." When off-world visitors come to Garuda, if they breath the atmosphere, it is impossible for them to leave (if they do they shrivel and die). A "Shangri La." That is why all Garudians who travel off of their own planet must breathe their own atmosphere from time to time for nourishment and rejuvenation.

BELLA

age: 19
rank: Praxian Sentinel
sex: female

Planet History

On Praxis an amazon society has developed due to a previous civilizations's genetic experimentation. The only evidence of this earlier civilization are strange, anti-gravity devices and a gene bank which maintains the population. However, all children develop as women on Praxis. The artificial insemination techniques do not produce male children. Zor visited Praxis on his "seeding expedition." He found a remote location to plant the mysterious Invid Flower of Life. His expedition was discovered by the amazons who lived on the planet. The men assigned to Zor's mission were tempted by the beauty of the women of Praxis but Zor would not let them leave the ship. The warrior women—primitive in nature—considered the Robotech Masters as celestial beings. They never forgot the race of men which seeded the planet. When the Invid came, drawn by the aura of the Flower of Life, the Praxian council decided to send an envoy to find Zor and get help. They harnessed many of their "anti-gravity globes" and created a space vehicle. This primitive vehicle was not too effective maneuvering in space. The pilots (Bella and Gnea) and crew were rescued by Lron and his Carbonarite Fleet—also on a similar mission to find Zor.

Bella is a young warrior from the plains region of Praxis. She is skilled in the use of all primitive weapons from her planet. She uses a crossbow equipped with many specialized arrows. Her companion is a powerful Falcon—Hagane. Together they formed a team which patrolled their region of Praxis. When the Invid came, Bella was one of the leaders of the Resistance. Unfortunately, the Invid were too powerful for the brave but ill-equipped Praxians. Together with a group of amazon warriors, Bella tried to find a way to get help for her planet. The Inorganics and their blood-hounds—the Cougars—kept them busy until they discovered a way to knit together a "sail" which would hold enough anti-gravity globes to lift their group off the planet. Bella must leave her stallion on Praxis.

Bella is tall (over 2 meters) and lithe. But her lean figure is muscular while still remaining feminine. She wears light armor (chain mail) and protective armbands. Her skill as a warrior is unquestioned. Her beauty is something that she does not understand—coming from a society in which there are no males. The ritual of courtship has fallen into disrepair. It remains for her to be introduced to the special nature of sexuality while a member of the Sentinels. She is also quite intelligent and a quick learner.

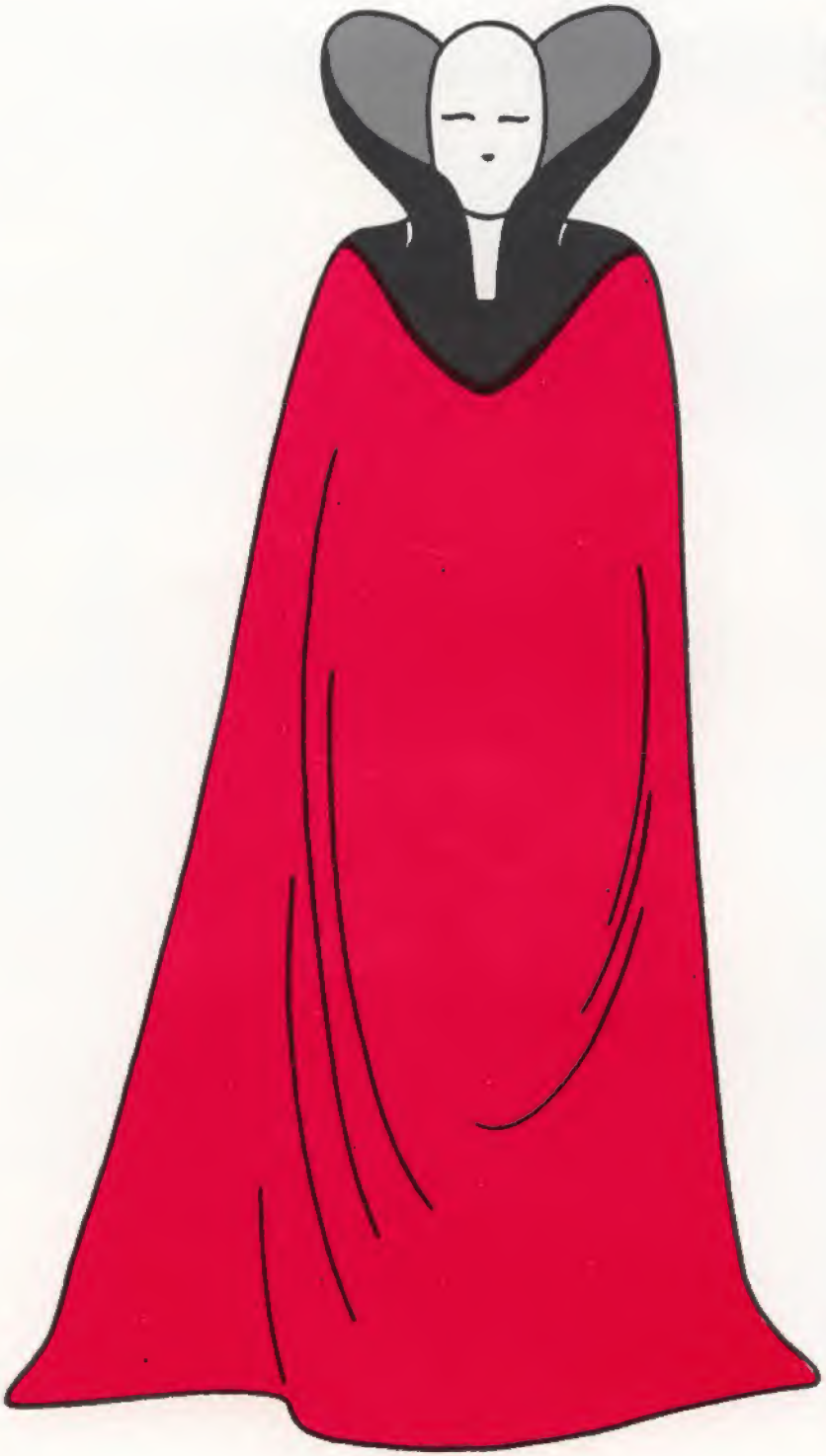
Bella's only difference from a typical human appearance is in her eyes which are avian (bird-like).

age: 14
rank: Praxian Sentinel—pilot of the anti-gravity machine.
sex: female

Gnea is a young Praxian warrior. She is on the verge of womanhood. Her skill at manipulating the anti-gravity globes of Praxis gave her an opportunity to join in the mission to find Zor and liberate her homeworld. Her family was destroyed by the Invid and she has become close friends with Bella whom she feels is the only Praxian with the strength to lead their people in a successful rebellion against the Inorganics and later the Invid.

Gnea is not as skilled a warrior as Bella. But she has mastered the crossbow. She is not strong enough to wield a broadsword.

Gnea has lovely, long red hair which seems to constantly flow around her head. It is almost mystical—her hair seems to have a life of its own. When Gnea pilots the anti-gravity devices, she must first braid her hair to keep it from getting in the way. She learns the meaning of friendship and fellowship while serving as a Sentinel. At first her only concern was to free her planet. But the more she learned about the Invid, the more she wanted to make sure that these insidious aliens would be stopped from conquering the universe.



SARNA

sex: female
Caretaker of Haydon IV
Charter member of the Sentinels

Sarna is a systems analyst. She determines much of the strategy for battles and suggests ways in which the living conditions can be improved during the Sentinels campaign against the Invid. She is frustrated due to the fact that outside of her homeworld, she must do things for herself. She no longer has the luxury of merely thinking about something to have it done. Neither Sarna or Veidt reveal their body structure beneath their robes until the end of the saga (it is strange that they never eat or even use their hands). Janice is the only member of the Sentinels who suspects that Veidt and Sarna are not alive. Janice is an android herself and recognizes kindred spirits. She also gets a terrible headache whenever she is around either Veidt or Sarna for a long period of time.

What then is underneath their robes? A mass of wires and integrated circuits, arranged in a biomechanical approximation of the central nervous system and skeleton, without arms or legs—one long torso with small anti-gravity devices which allow Sarna and Veidt to skim over the ground.

VEIDT

Sex: male
Caretaker of Haydon IV
Charter member of the Sentinels

The ultimate diplomat on his homeworld, anything that Veidt can think up is his, as if by magic. Outside of his homeworld, Veidt controls his destiny through logic and diplomacy—he joins Exedore and Cabell in forming a triumvirate to give guidance and direction to the Sentinels. Veidt is not a warrior.

HAYDON IV

Homeworld of Veidt and Sarna

Haydon IV is a totally synthetic planet. It is a fact known only to Haydon, the original architect of the project. Things just happen on Haydon IV. Legend has it that everything happens by "magic." The origin and current location of Haydon is a mystery. The various off-worlders who have dealings with the society found on Haydon IV have no idea that the planet is synthetic. The entire planet is like a giant ride at a theme park, only the entire world is the theme park (a combination of "futureworld meets 'Pirates of the Caribbean'"). Veidt and Sarna are the caretakers of Haydon IV. But even they do not know the reality of their world. They have been sending status reports for years into outer space, supposedly to Haydon—a direct communication to their god/creator. There are never any problems or crises on Haydon IV—none that is until Zor decides to use the planet as another potential site for a plantation to grow the Flowers of Life.

Zor's reasoning was simple. On Haydon IV nothing ever goes wrong. Whether by magic or by some unexplainable property of the planet, Haydon IV is paradise. He was trying to determine if the Flower of Life would grow successfully outside of the environment of Optera and without the intervention of the Children of Zor. Because the planet is synthetic there is only a minimal topsoil ground cover. Beneath is a steel shell which houses all of the mechanisms which power the planet. It is like Oz and Haydon is the planet's legendary wizard.

Zor's pact with Veidt and Sarna is so unusual that there is no reference to it in Haydon scripture. Veidt agrees and a plantation is begun.

The Invid Sensor Nebula detected the presence of active protoculture matrix on the planet and communicated this fact to Optera. The Invid were quick to respond. They attacked without warning and totally took the planet's defenses by surprise. The Invid found little use for the Flowers of Life growing on Haydon IV, but they felt that the planet was too perfect to give up. It became another conquest, another jewel in the crown. A detachment of Inorganics were ordered to occupy the planet on the off chance that Zor would return to check on his experiment on Haydon IV before returning to his homeworld.

Regent and Tesla.

TESLA

age: 117 (relatively young for an Invid)
rank: High Ranking Scientist—One of the Regent's inner circle.

Tesla is an ambitious Invid scientist who is ordered by the Regent to remain on the moon of Fantoma following an Invid raid in which they conquered the remnants of the once powerful Robotech Masters' society. Tesla's job is to monitor the activities of the Inorganics—Invid bio-mechanical watchdogs—and gather information in regard to the destination of the armada of Robotech Masters' ships which have left the moon of Fantoma prior to the Invid invasion. In the presence of the Regent, Tesla is an obedient slave. Once left to his own devices, Tesla becomes a cunning and ambitious player in the intergalactic search for the secrets of protoculture.

Tesla plays both sides against one another as the Regent and his mate, the Regiss, vie for power. Tesla is a survivor. Eventually the Regent decides to kill the real Tesla and substitute a simulagent to take his place. The Regent is not about to lose face in regard to his feud with the Regiss—and besides, with a double, he may be able to get information from the Regiss in the form of confidential communication between his mate and her double agent (the original Tesla) when, and if, she decides to speak directly to Tesla. This diabolically clever idea is nipped in the bud when the Robotech Expeditionary Force succeeds in capturing the Invid stronghold on the moon of Fantoma.

Tesla becomes a prisoner. He leaks information to the R.E.F. in exchange for his life. Tesla becomes a valuable tool in the plans of the Sentinels to liberate the various planets which have been conquered in the sudden burst of Invid Imperialism.

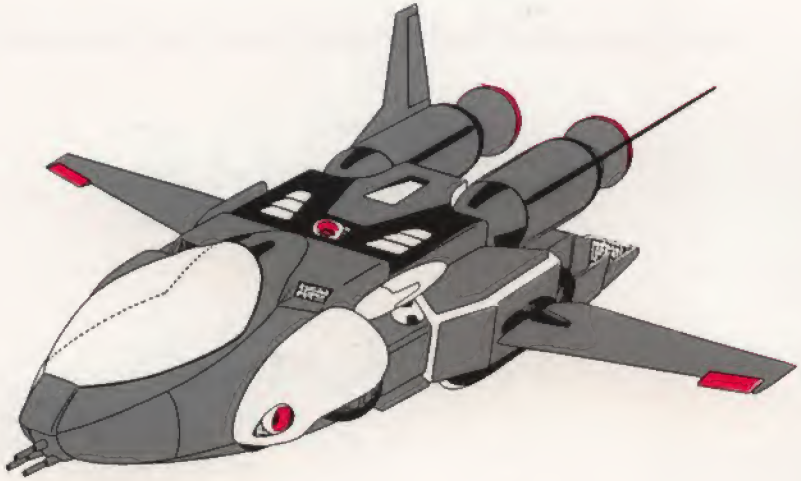
Tesla's motive for helping the Sentinels is simple. He wants to overthrow the Regent and become the supreme leader of his people. In order to do this he has taken a very unsophisticated member of the Sentinels' force, a youth from Peryton known as Burak, under his wing. Using Burak (much in the same way as Nero Wolfe used Archie Godwin), Tesla is able to get his hands on the fruit of the Invid Flower of Life which is being grown and harvested on the various colonial worlds of the Invid. Tesla hopes that by eating the fruit of these mutated flowers of life he will become more highly evolved than the Regent and will naturally ascend to the throne.

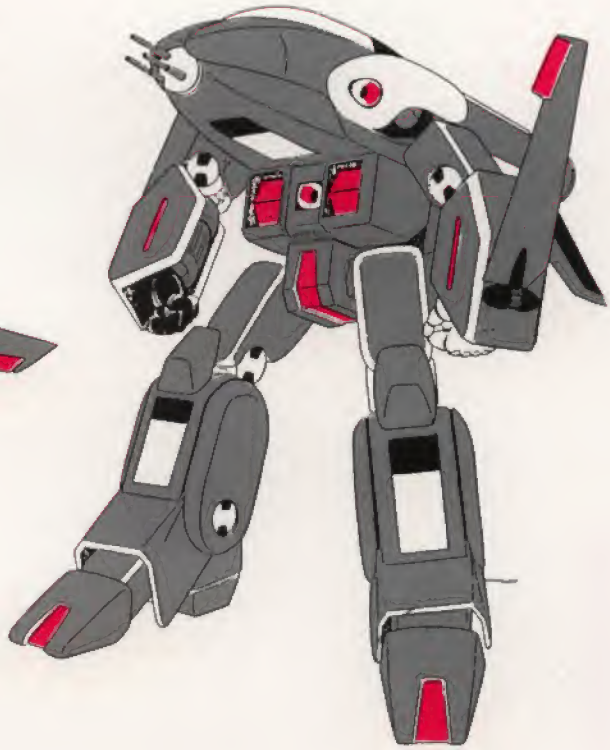
Tesla is a naturally evil personality. He is on the same level as the Regent—but for different reasons. Where the Regent is somehow like Perone or Marcos, Tesla is more like Rasputin or Cagliostro. One is an evil dictator created out of the instrument which is inherent in the system, the other is a totally malevolent entity.

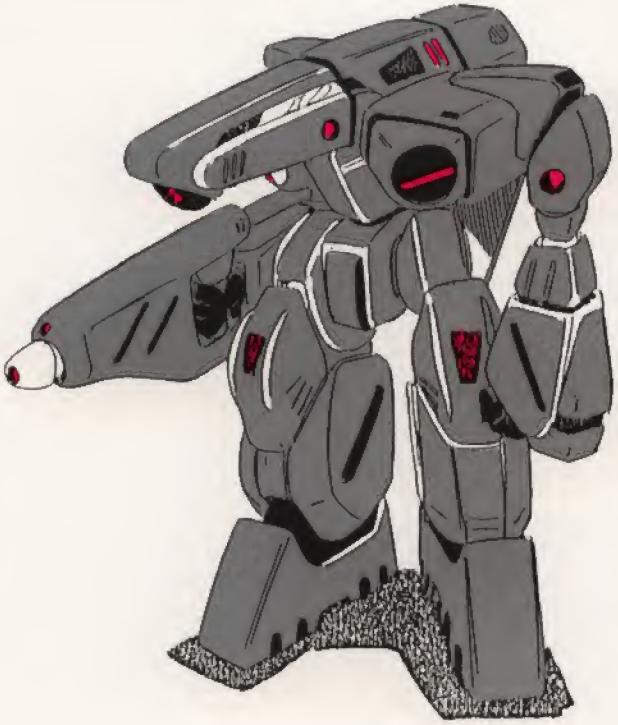
APPENDIX

MORE MECHA

ROBOTECH INVADERS

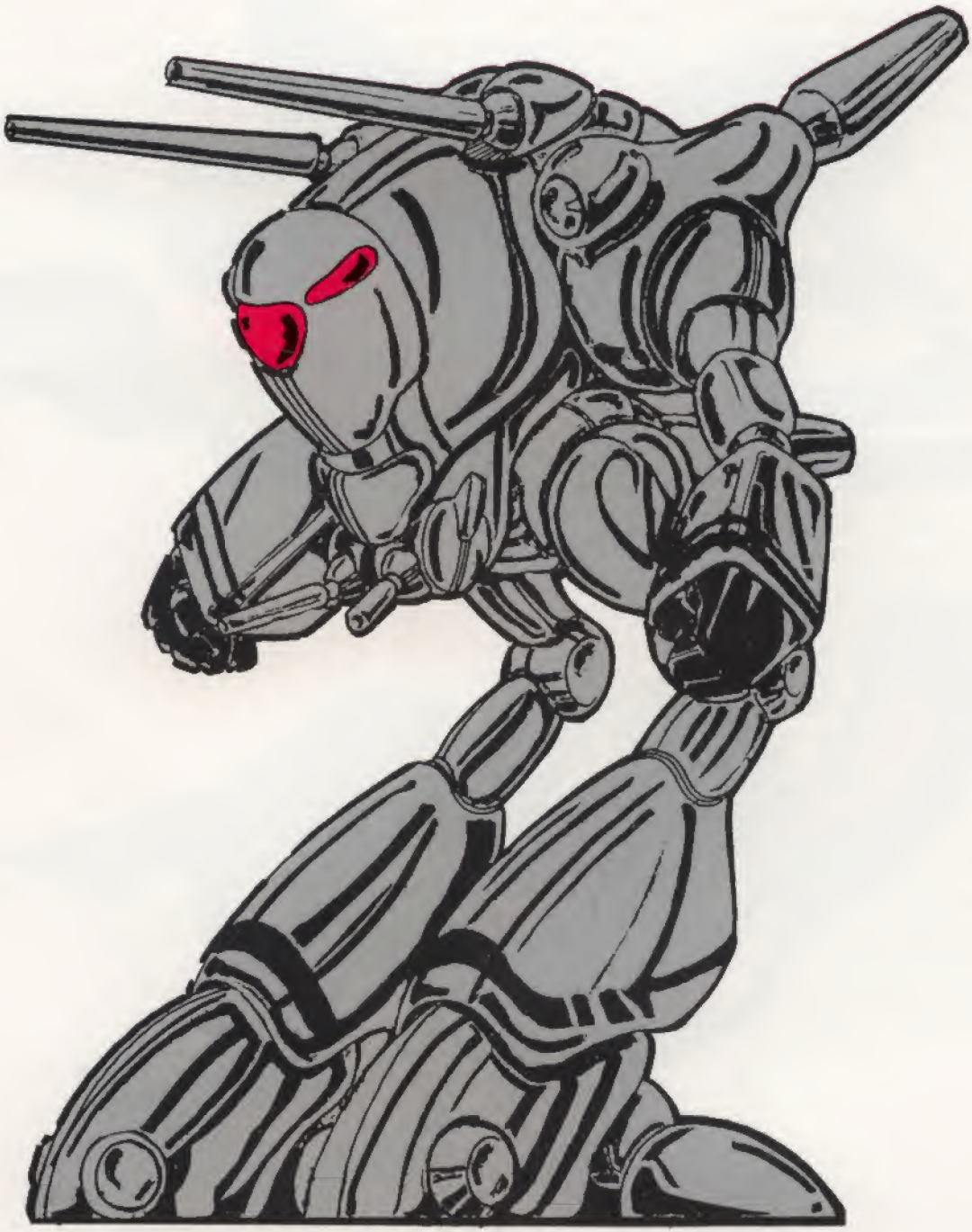




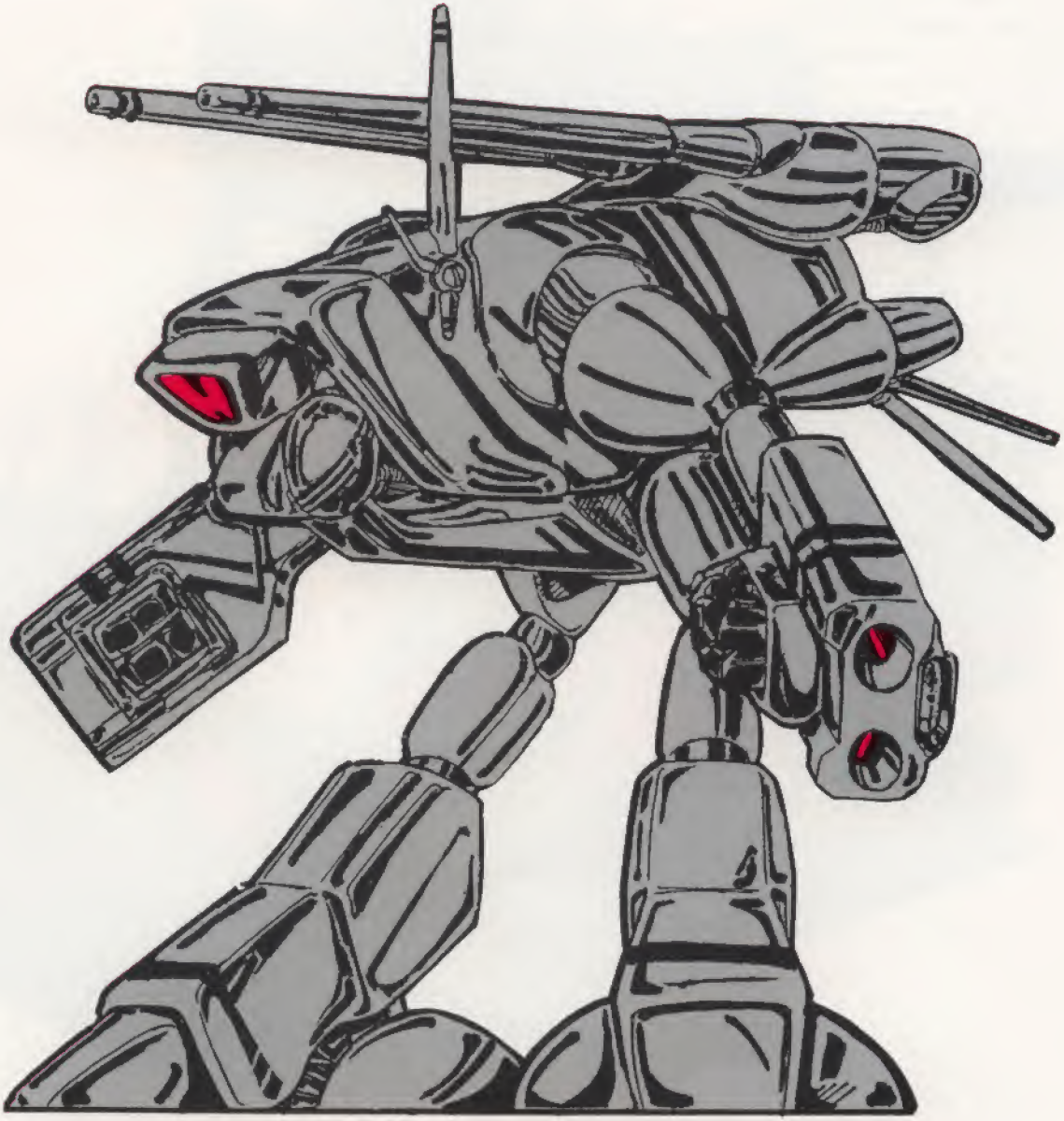


HOVER TANK

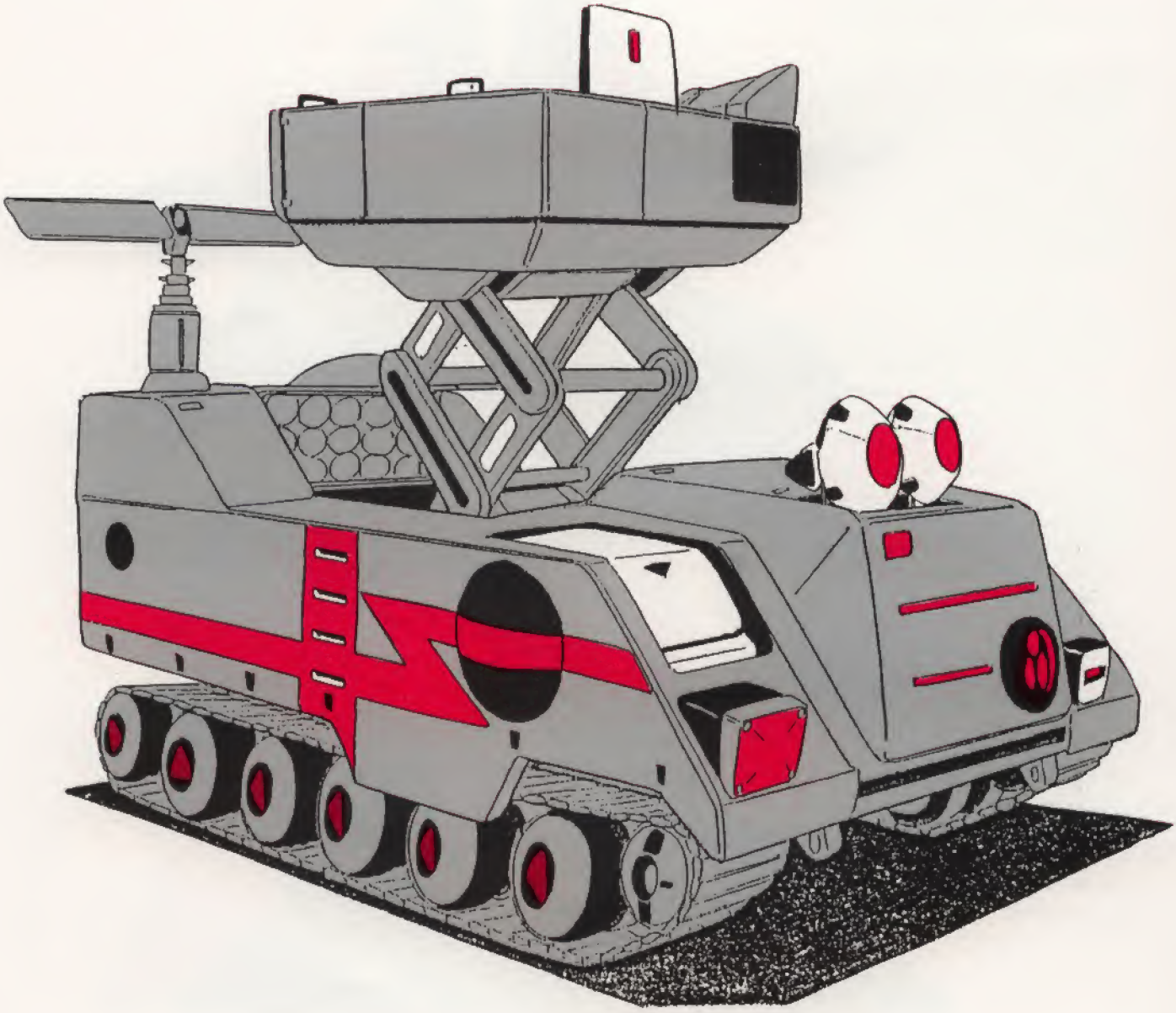
TACTICAL BATTLE POD



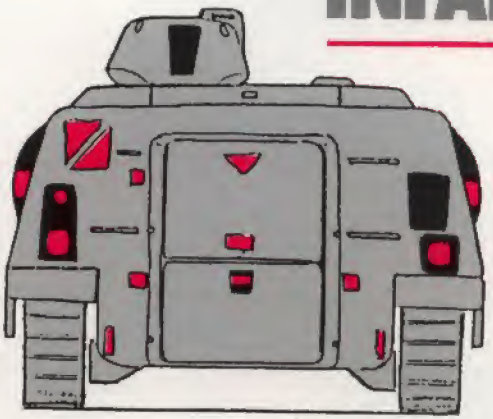
ZENTRAEDI OFFICERS' BATTLE POD

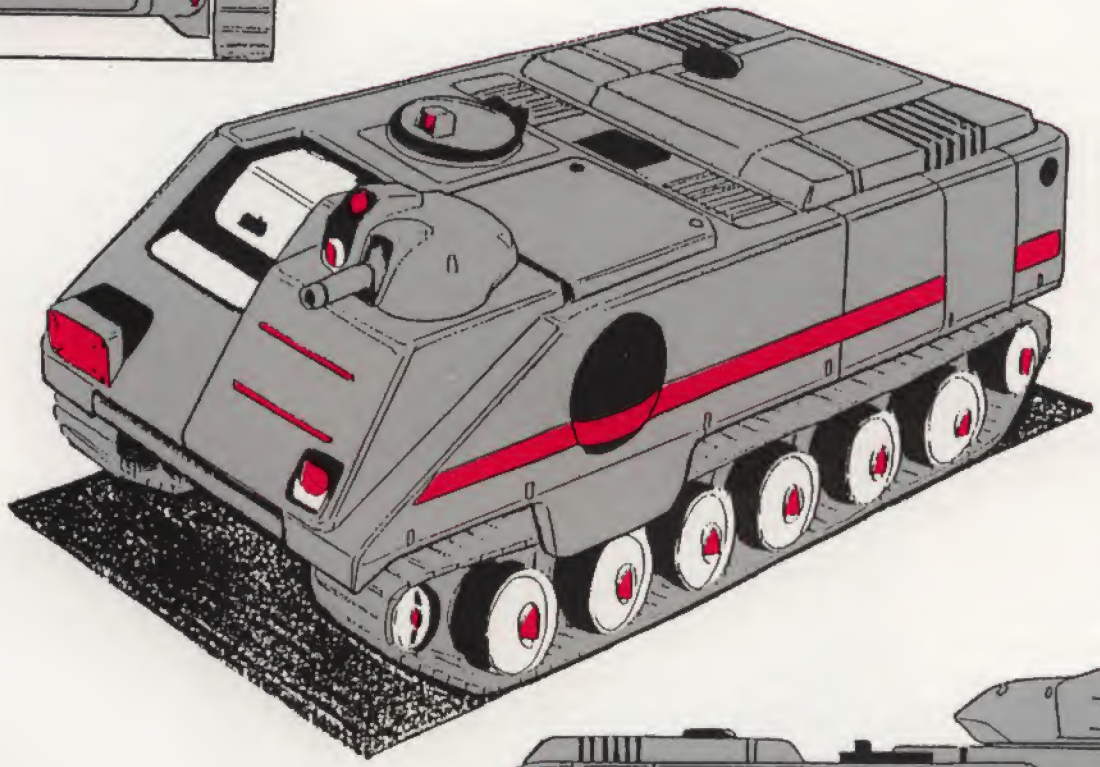


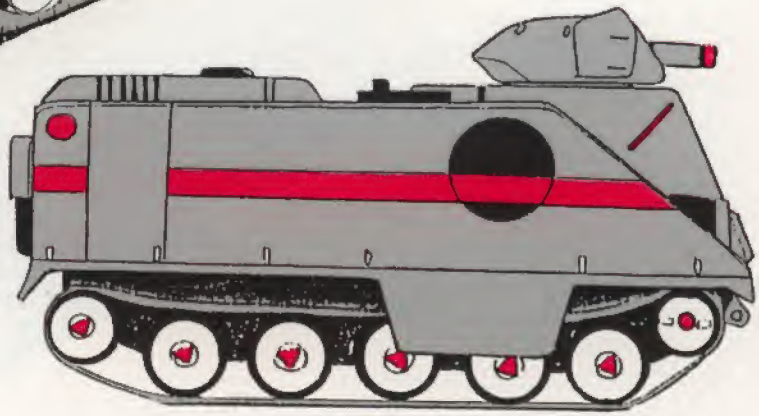
COMMAND BATTLE VEHICLE



INFANTRY BATTLE VEHICLE







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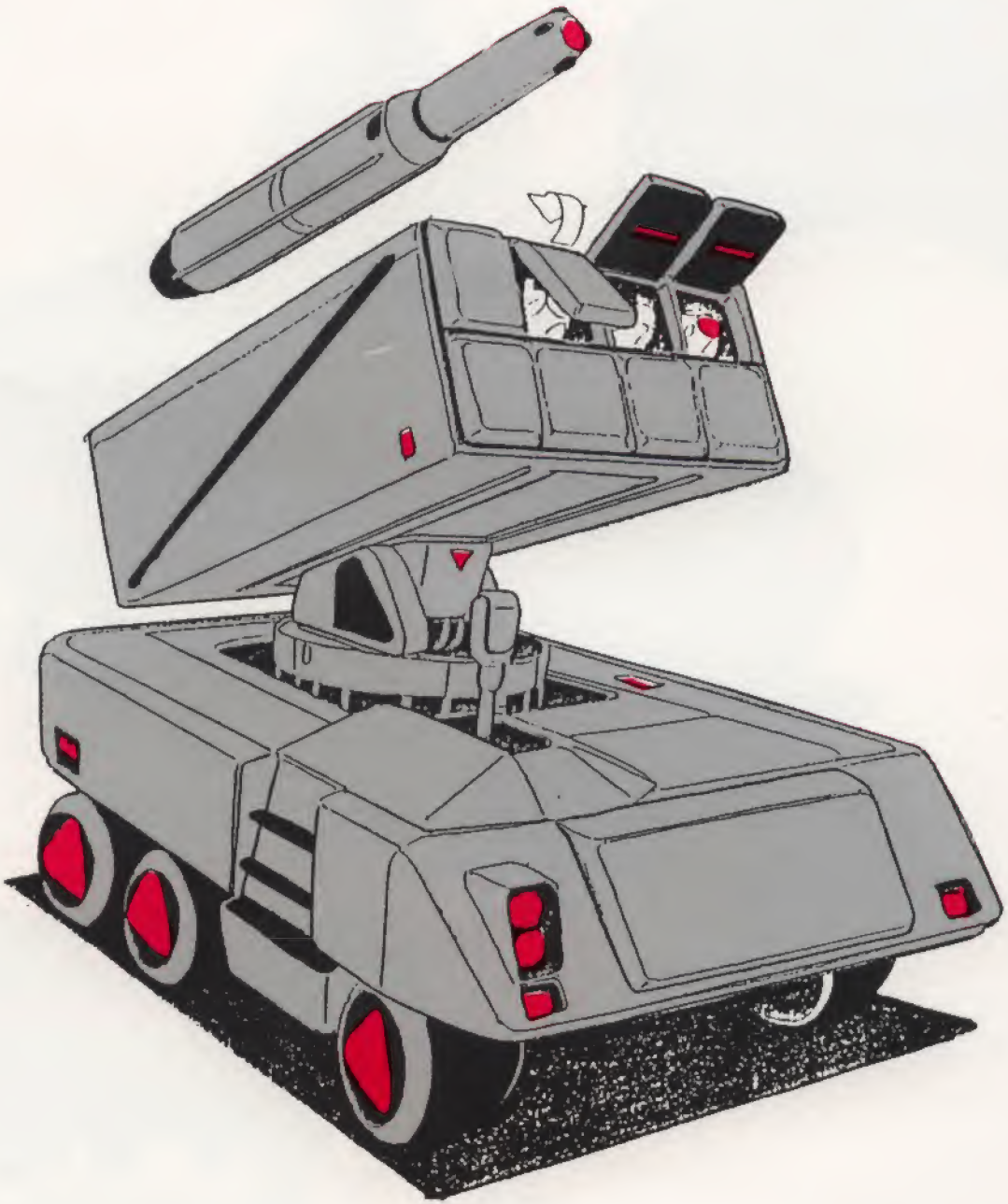

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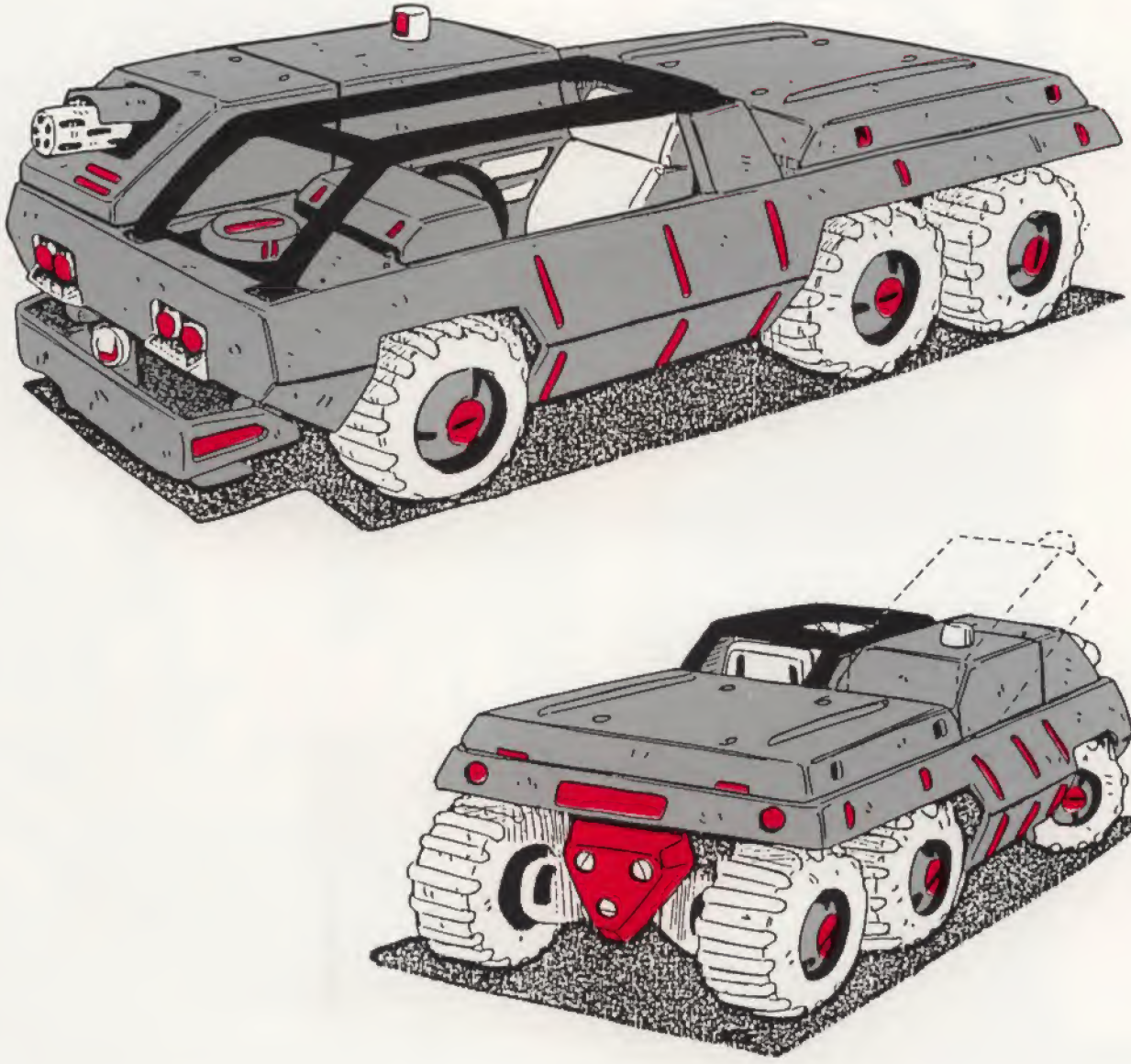
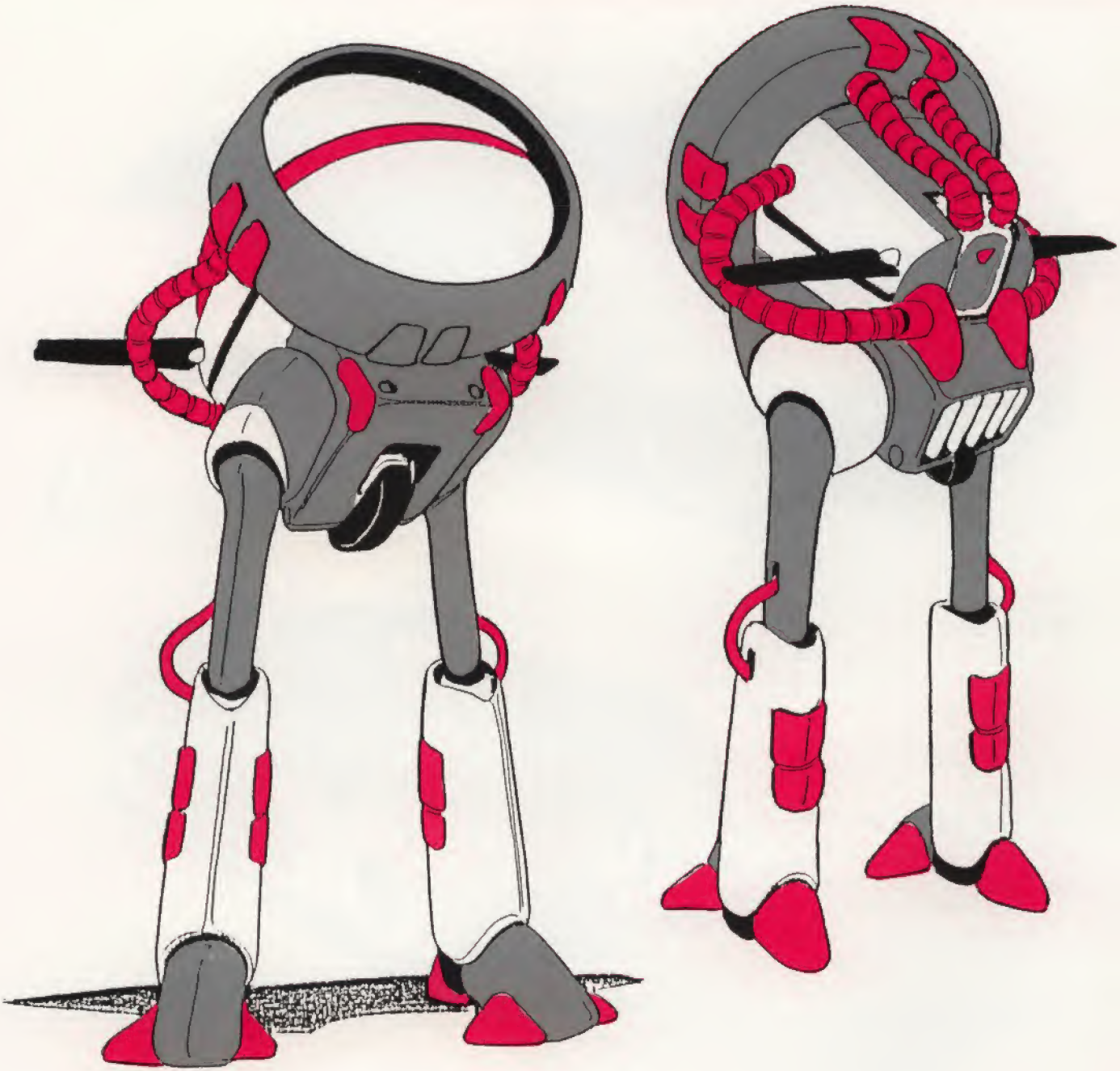
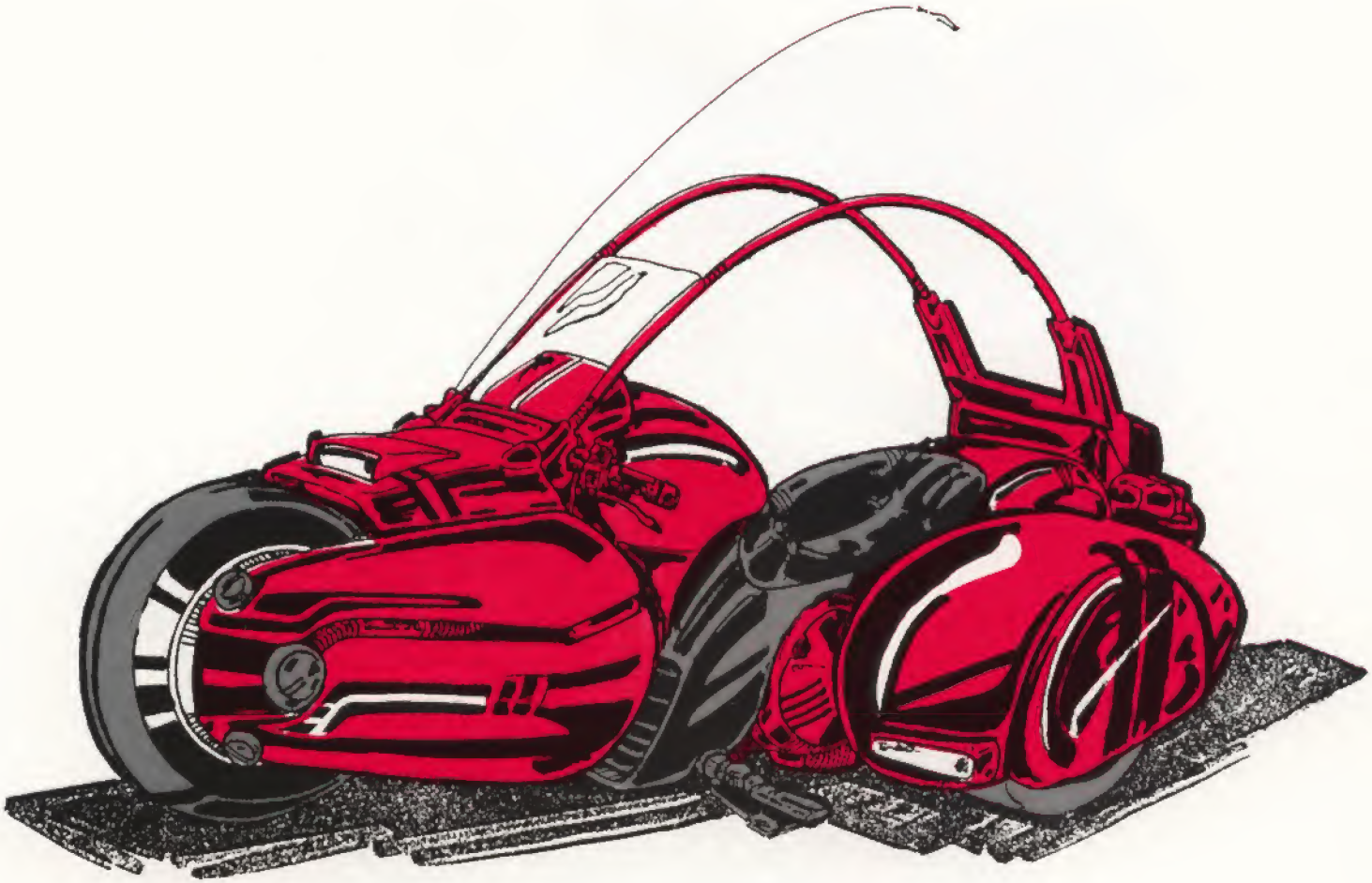


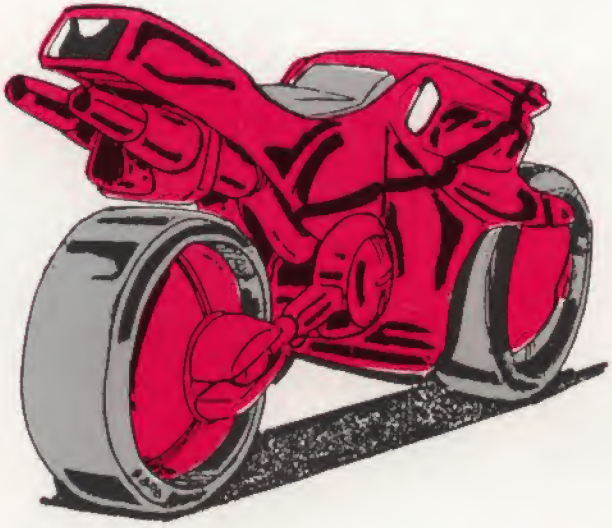
SEARCHLIGHT MECHA

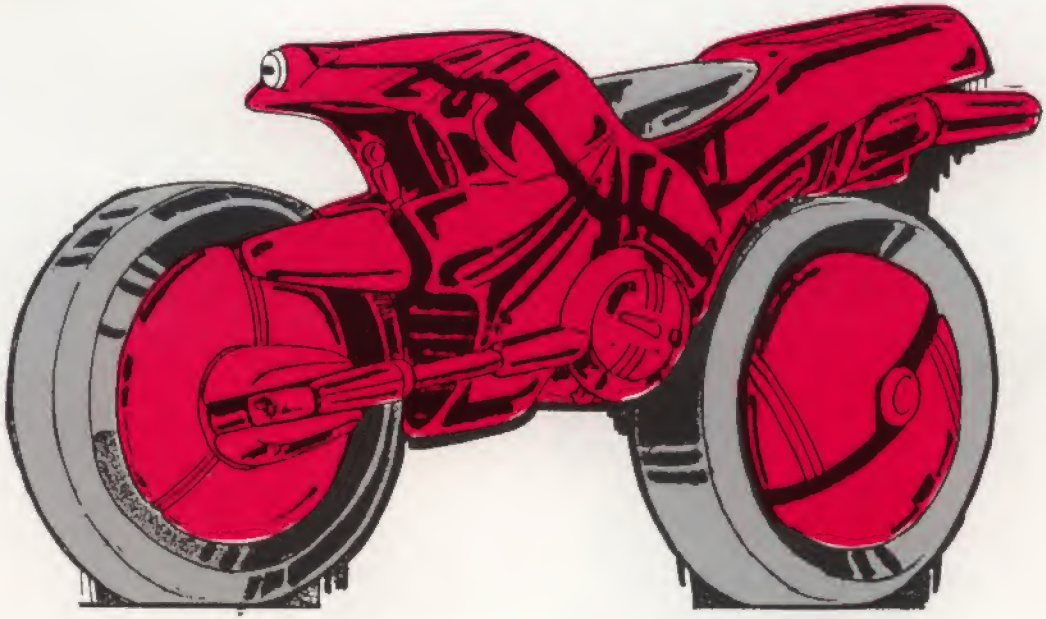


PROTOTYPE CYCLONE

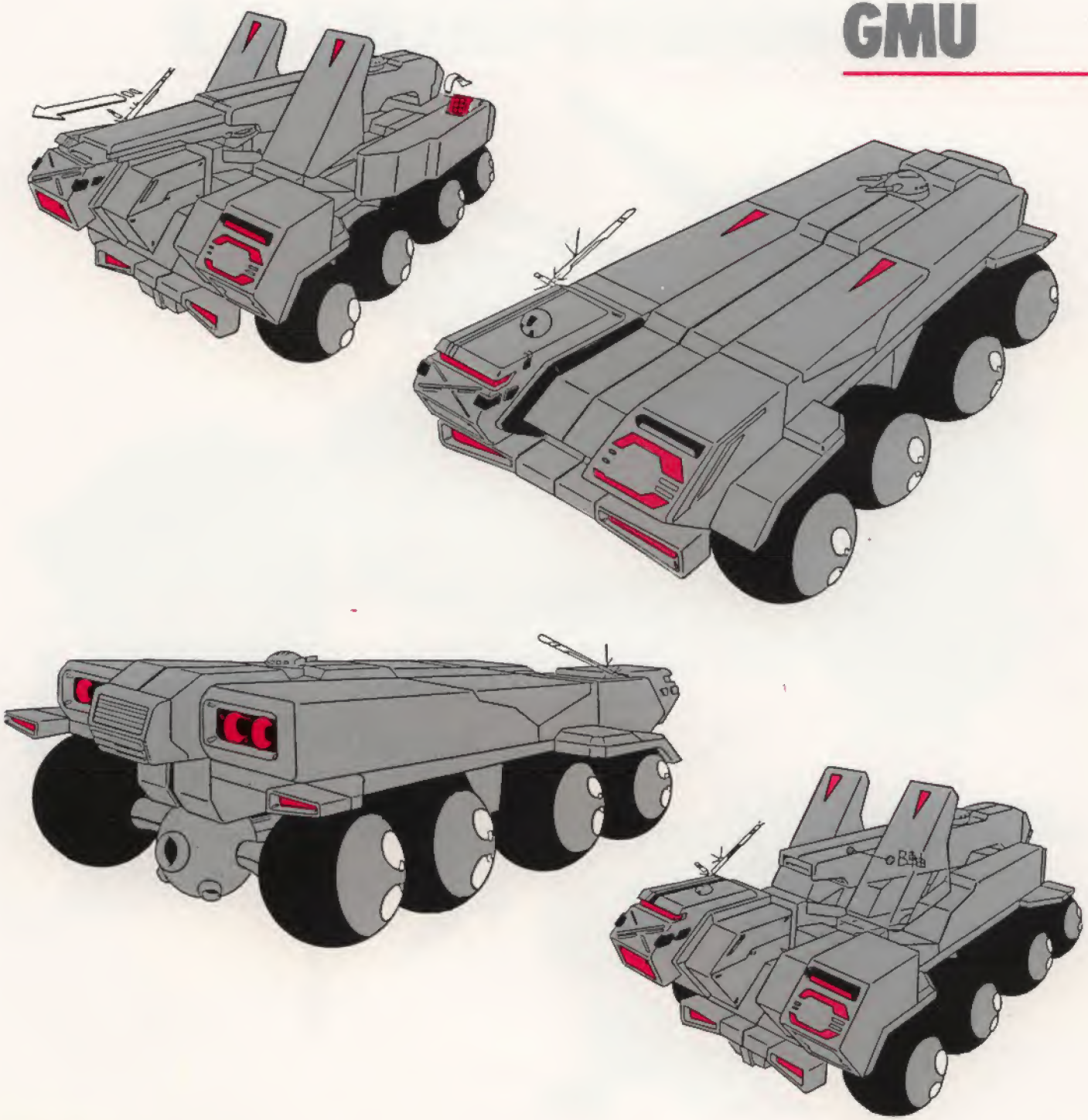


TWO-WHEELED BATTLE VEHICLE

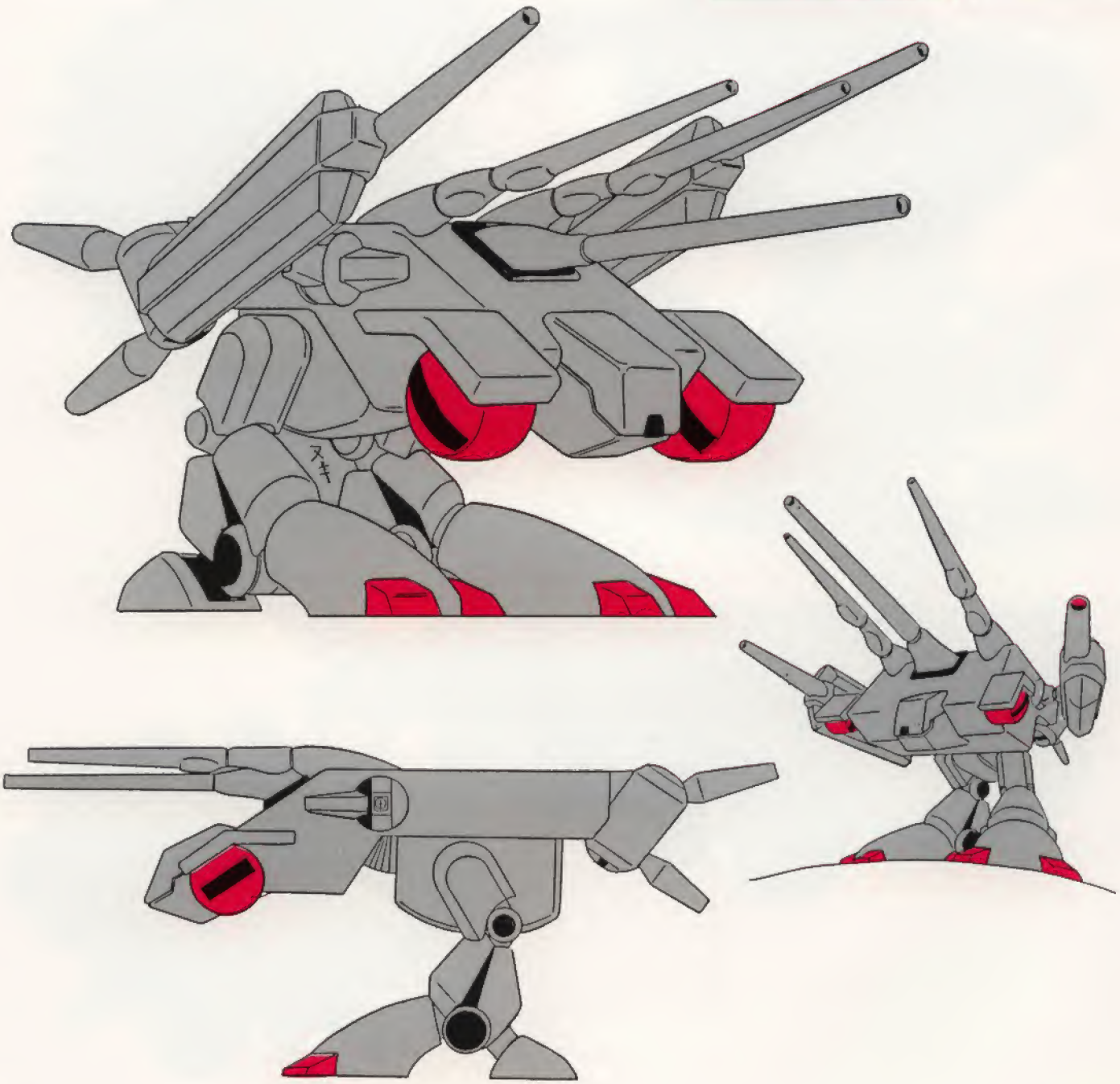




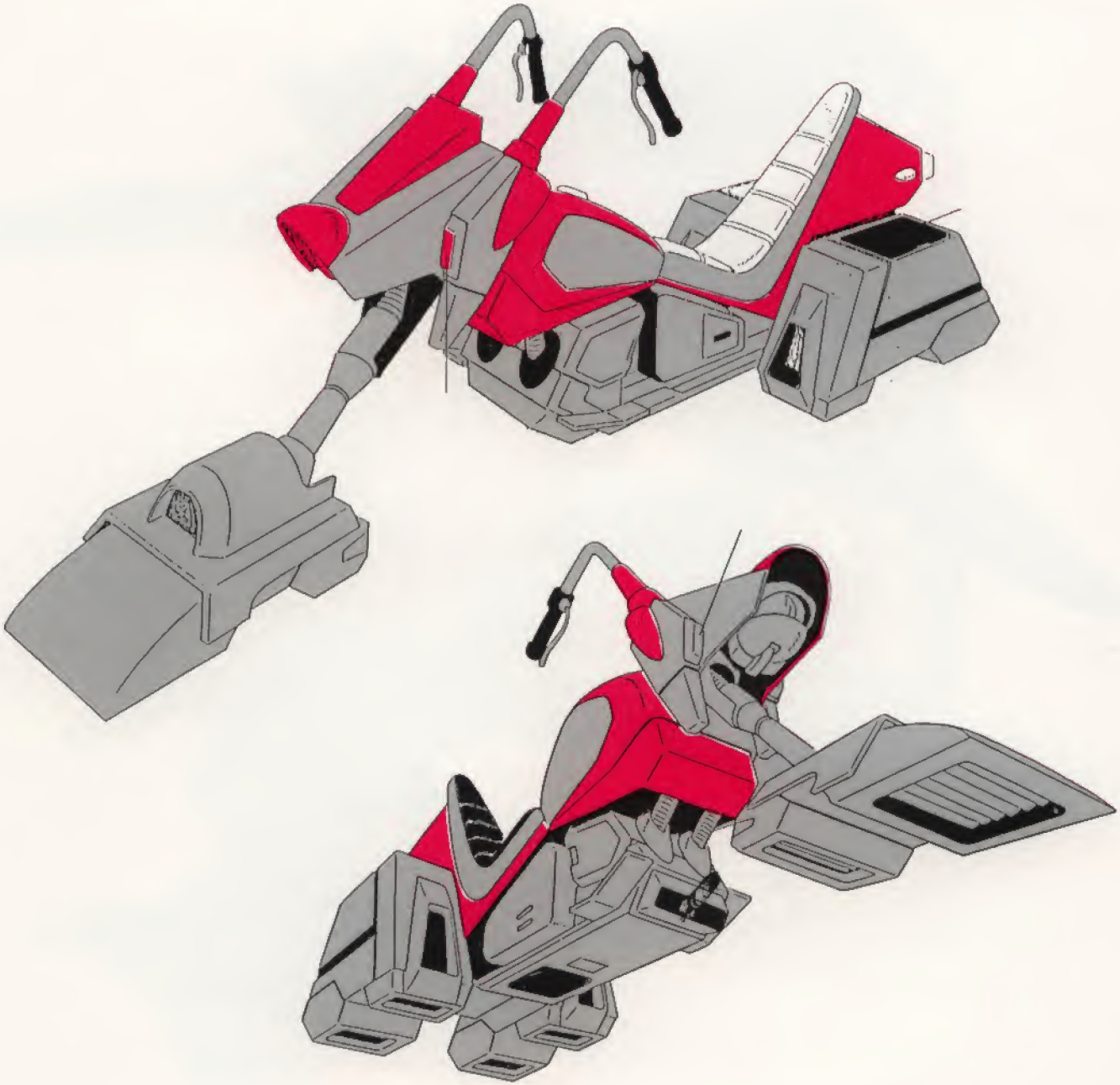
GMU



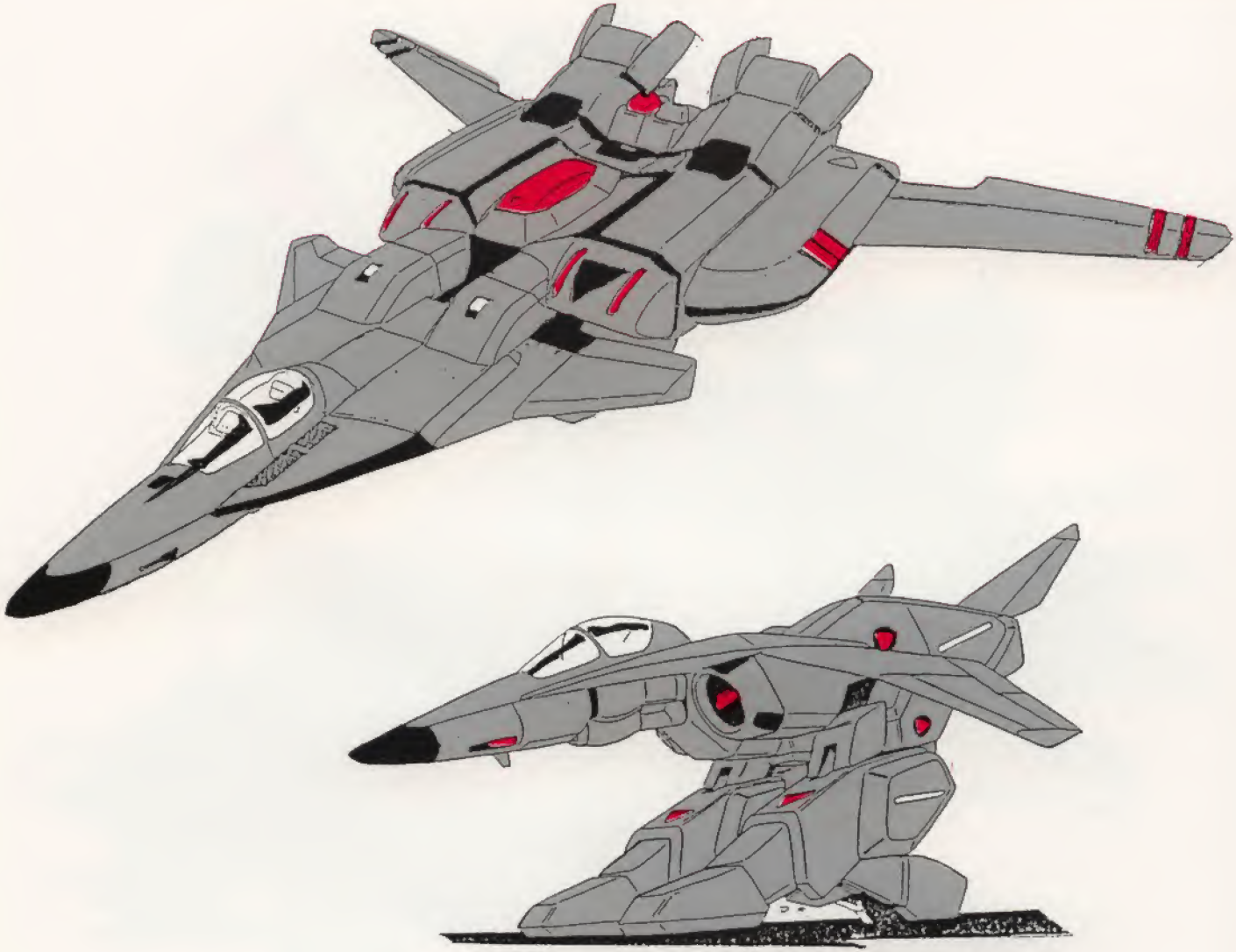
M.A.C. II



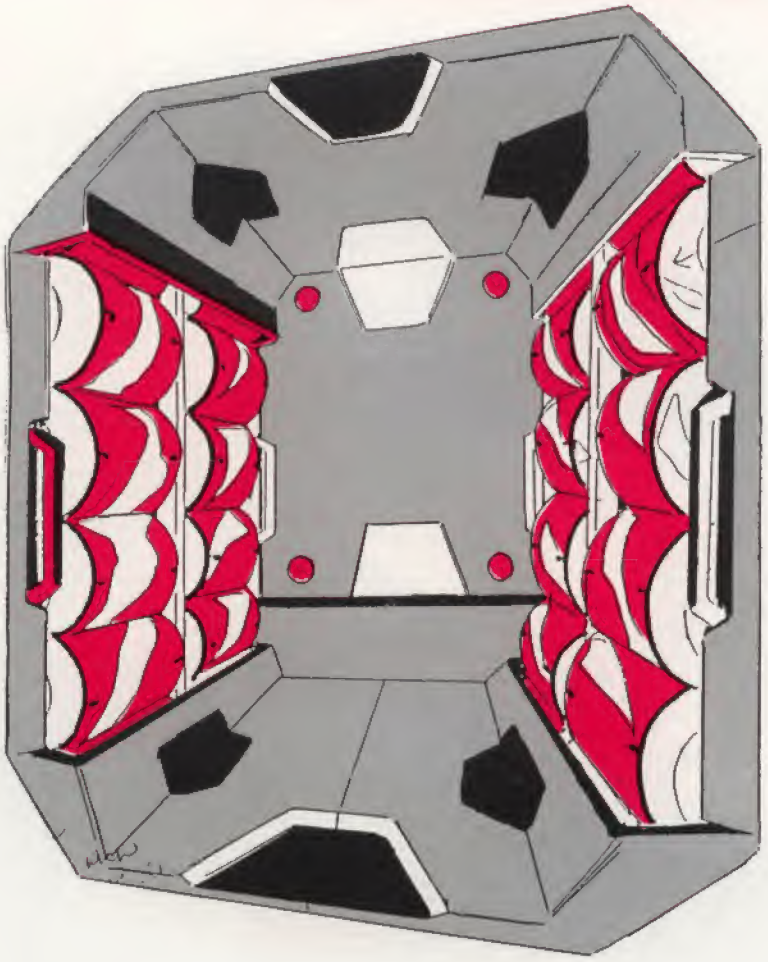
HOVER CYCLE

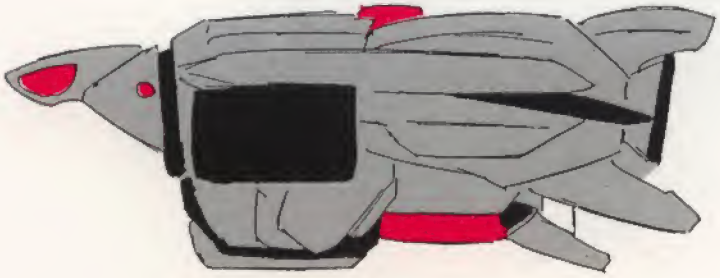


ARMORED ALPHA FIGHTER

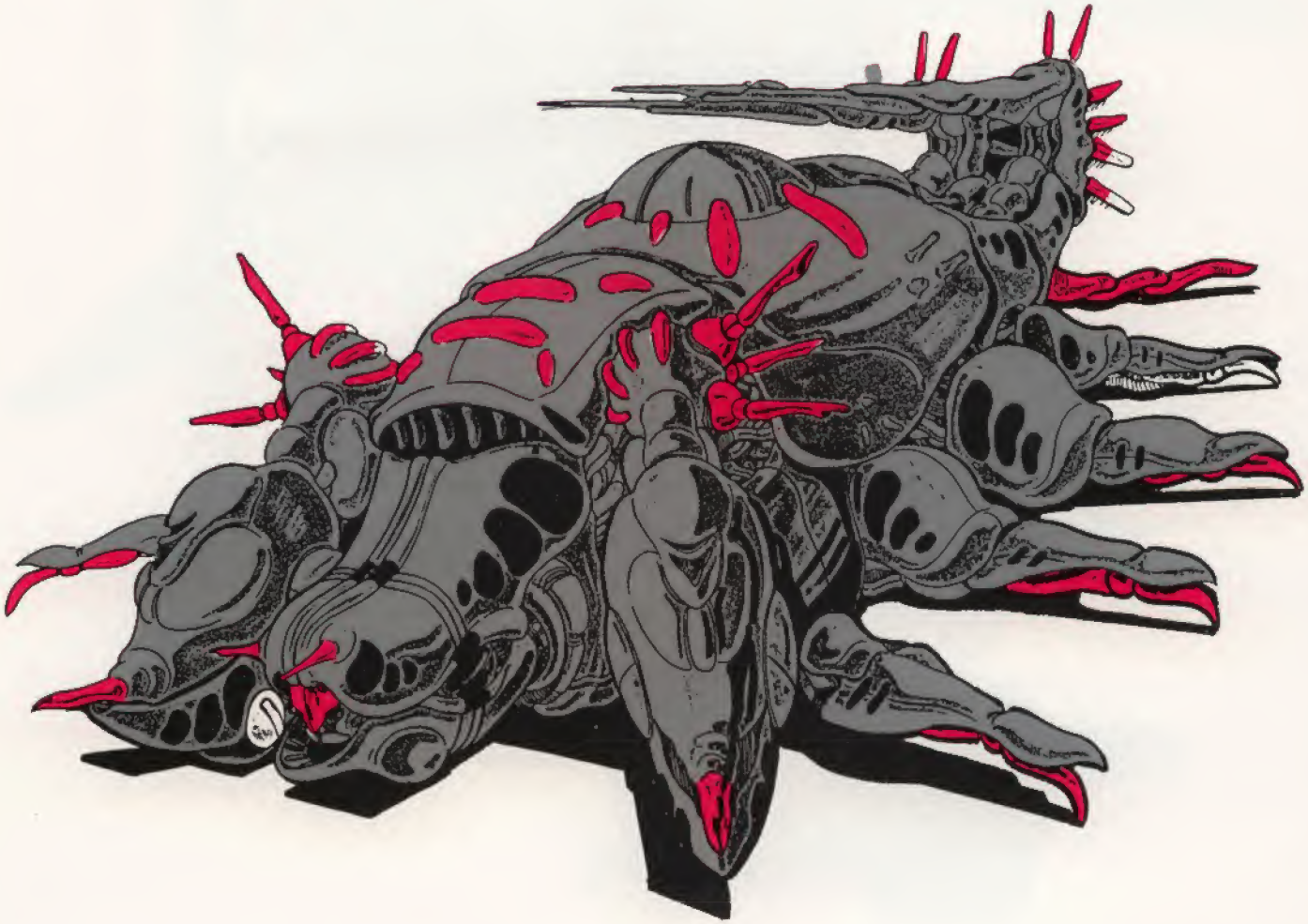


BETA FIGHTER



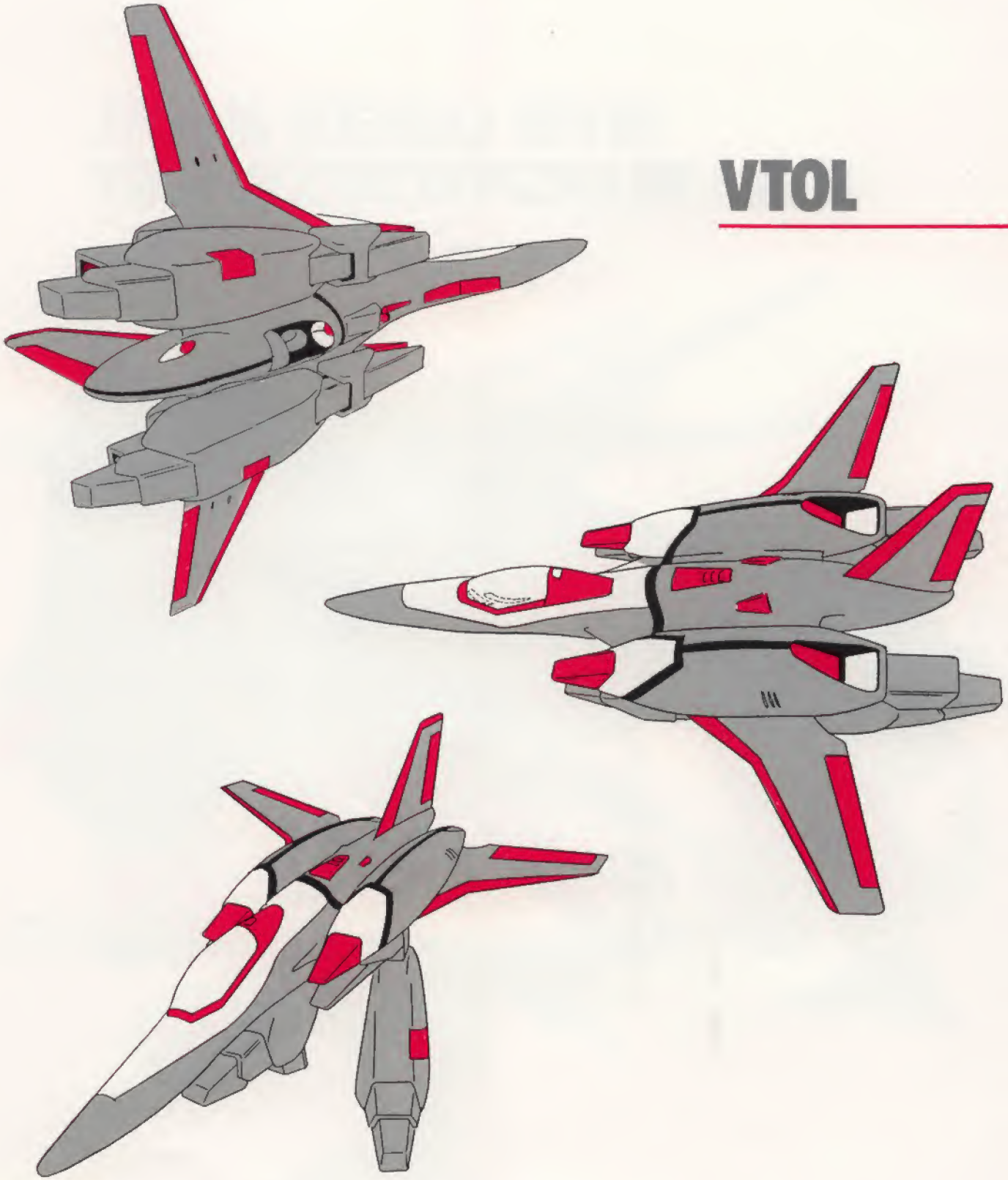


INVID LAND CRUISER

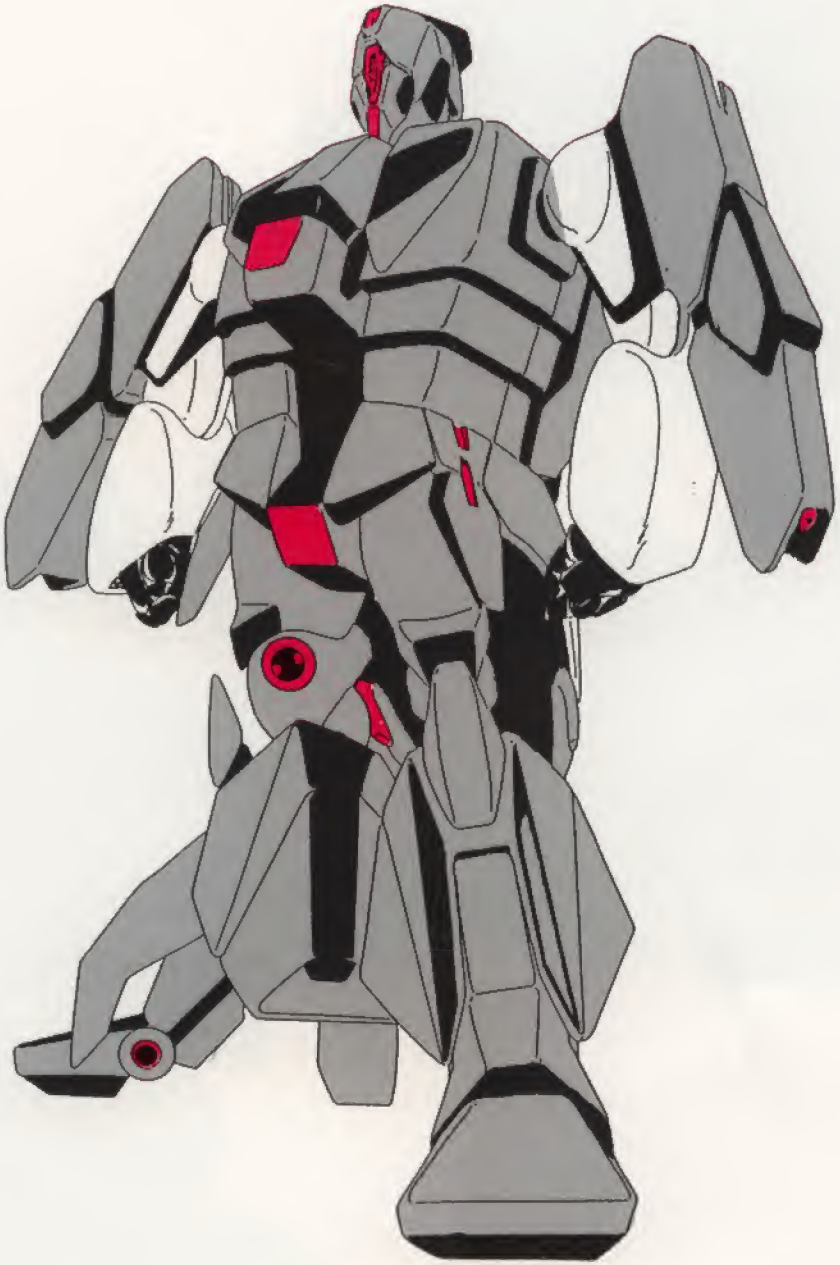


INVID LARGER MODEL TRANSPORTATION UNIT

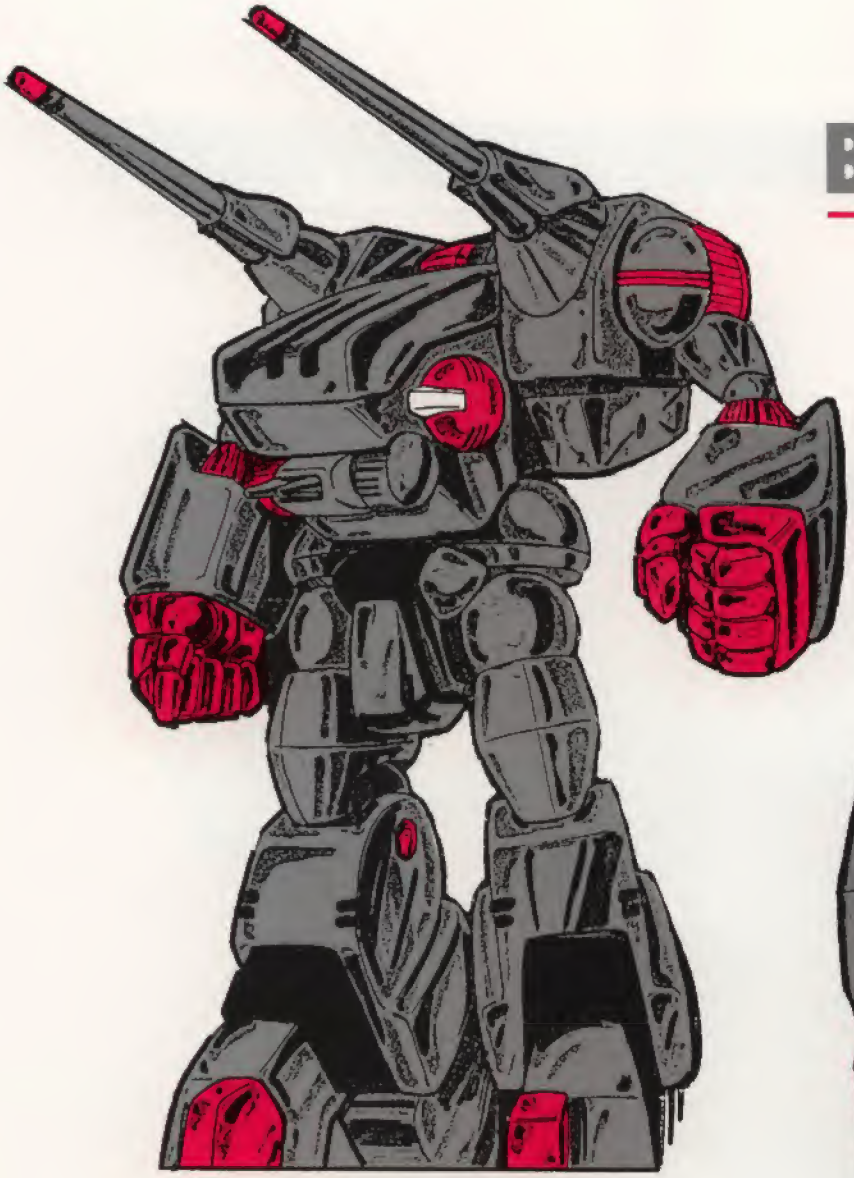
VTOL

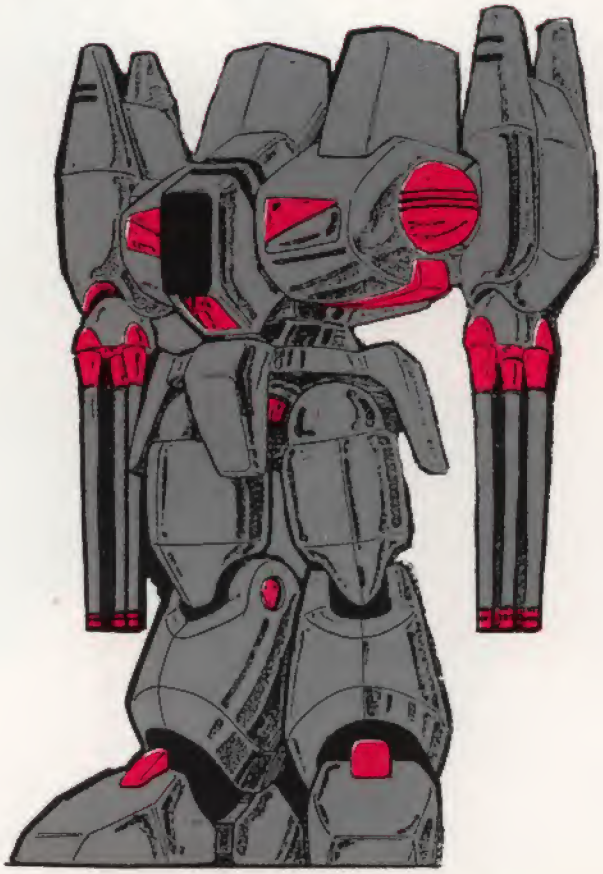


VERITECH HOVER TANK



BATTLOIDS





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